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A BOOK OF ENGLISH PROSE



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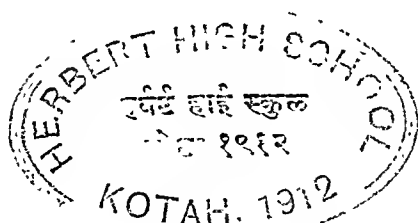
# A BOOK OF ENGLISH PROSE

1470-1900

SELECTED BY

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TO MY WIFE

## PREFACE

WHEN called upon to justify the scanty time allotted in English education to the national literature, defenders of the "grand old fortifying classical curriculum" have often pointed out that nobody acquires the art of writing Latin prose without incidentally bestowing close attention upon a number of the choicest pieces of English prose offered for the purpose of translation. For those students of Latin who reached the standard of a good sixth-form, or of classical honours at a university, the defence was not without reason; though for the reduced number of classical students to-day it is possibly less adequate than it was, since the modern desire to find interesting and novel material sometimes leads the teacher or examiner to select a tricky piece of current journalism in preference to a model of pure style, just as it leads him in dealing with younger pupils to displace Caesar and his battalions in favour of a dialogue about a half-holiday and a cricket match.

Be this as it may, the number of English-speaking boys and girls who gain an acquaintance in this way with the best English prose is strictly limited. Cannot something more be done than has been attempted yet to bring a knowledge of the best prose within the reach of all who enjoy what is called *secours*

education? This book is the outcome of a belief that something more is both possible and eminently desirable.

It is true that an anthology of prose is not so simple a matter as an anthology of poetry. The criticism of prose style is less advanced than the criticism of poetic style. There is not the same agreement as to what constitutes excellence in the case of prose as in the case of poetry. Nay, the very fact that we rightly tend to value prose primarily for its matter, not for its manner, might be held to foredoom to failure the attempt to select passages mainly in virtue of their form. Again, the amount of prose is much larger than the amount of poetry, and the best passages of a prose work do not always stand out with the same distinctness as the best passages of a lengthy poem.

But real as these objections are (and the reviewer, it is hoped, will appreciate the forethought that here offers them for his use), they are less cogent than might at first appear. There are many famous passages of prose, as any student of English literature who turns over these pages will readily admit—passages whose pre-eminent excellence is established by the secure judgment of the world of letters—passages, therefore, without knowledge of which an Englishman's education cannot be said to be complete. Further, in some prose writings, and especially in oratory, there are one or two paragraphs of supreme significance, the central point of the author's argument, the impressive climax of his appeal. Lastly, the relation between matter and form is by no means the scheme. Though the distinction is real

and important, when we are bent on analysis, yet excellence of style always implies excellence of matter. Without goodness of the thing said, mere skill in saying would be as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. No piece, it is believed, has been admitted within these pages that does not answer to the test of "thorough truth of substance and an answering truth of form."

The editor hopes, therefore, that he may without presumption offer this collection to the boys and girls of the English-speaking world as a "golden book" of the choicest prose, in the assurance that the more faithfully they study it, the more they will find in it to admire and to love, not in youth only but throughout their lives. Moreover, it will give them, if they care for the gift, a touchstone by which they can try other prose that is presented for their reading, an unerring rule by which they can accept the good and reject the bad. Whatever fate may be in store for the book now that it is at last completed, its compilation (if the personal note may be forgiven) has been a labour of love, and there are few pages that do not recall to the compiler memories of friends whose sympathetic appreciation has fortified his own judgment of, and deepened his own affection for, many a noble saying. He would fain hope that some of these utterances may go on sounding in the ears of his readers as they have sounded in his own, rememberable as the lines of great poetry, and not less powerful "to interpret life, to console, to sustain."

There is still a smaller use—and yet it is not small. Of prose that is perverse, pretentious, obscure

and affected, when it is not merely shapeless, how much we have at the present time; and how little that is simple, natural, and yet dignified and of a musical quality! If any one cares to learn something of the difficult art of writing, and of its last triumph, the "art to conceal art," there is no better way than by accustoming the ear to the finer cadences of the most perfect examples.

As excellence of style has been the single aim kept in view throughout, the book is not primarily, though to some extent it could hardly escape being, a collection of characteristic specimens. Considerations of space, and some other reasons, have determined the exclusion of prose fiction. Letters have also been excluded, except where, as in the case of Gray, they were remarkable for formal excellence of style. The editor is glad to think that these limitations of his scope and purpose prevent his work from entering into direct competition with the *Anthology of Modern English Prose*, recently compiled by his friends, Mrs. Barnett and Mrs. Dale (Messrs. Longmans).

Thanks are due to Messrs. Chatto & Windus for the use of the two extracts from R. L. Stevenson's works, and to Messrs. Macmillan for the other copyright matter contained in this book.

J. H. FOWLER.

CLIFTON COLLEGE,  
October, 1911.

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## PART I. 1470-1603

### SIR THOMAS MALORY

#### I. THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

BUT my time hieth fast, said the King. Therefore, said Arthur, take thou Excalibur, my good sword, and go with it to yonder water side, and when thou comest there, I charge thee throw my sword in that water, and come again, and tell me what thou there seest. My lord, said Bedivere, your commandment shall be done, and lightly bring you word again. So Sir Bedivere departed, and by the way he beheld that noble sword, that the pommel and haft were all of precious stones, and then he said to himself, If I throw this rich sword in the water, thereof shall never come good, but harm and loss. And then Sir Bedivere hid Excalibur under a tree. And as soon as he might he came again unto the King, and said he had been at the water, and had thrown the sword into the water. What sawest thou there? said the King. Sir, he said, I saw nothing but waves and winds. That is untruly said of thee, said the King; therefore go thou lightly again, and do my command as thou art to me lief and dear, spare not, but throw it in. Then Sir Bedivere returned again, and took the sword in his hand; and then him thought sin and shame to throw away that noble sword; and so eft he hid the sword, and returned again, and told to the King that he had been at the water, and done his commandment. What saw thou there? said

the King. Sir, he said, I saw nothing but the waters wap and the waves wan. Ah traitor, untrue, said King Arthur, now hast thou betrayed me twice. Who would have wend that thou that hast been to me so lief and dear, and thou art named a noble knight, and would betray me for the riches of the sword. But now go again lightly, for thy long tarrying putteth me in great jeopardy of my life, for I have taken cold. And but if thou do now as I bid thee, if ever I may see thee, I shall slay thee with mine own hands, for thou wouldest for my rich sword see me dead. Then Sir Bedivere departed, and went to the sword, and lightly took it up, and went to the water side, and there he bound the girdle about the hilts, and then he threw the sword as far into the water as he might, and there came an arm and an hand above the water, and met it and caught it, and so shook it thrice and brandished, and then vanished away the hand with the sword in the water. So Sir Bedivere came again to the King, and told him what he saw. Alas, said the King, help me hence, for I dread me I have tarried over long. Then Sir Bedivere took the King upon his back, and so went with him to that water side. And when they were at the water side, even fast by the bank hoved a little barge, with many fair ladies in it, and among them all was a queen, and all they had black hoods, and all they wept and shrieked when they saw King Arthur. Now put me into the barge, said the King: and so he did softly. And there received him three queens with great mourning, and so they set him down, and in one of their laps King Arthur laid his head, and then that queen said, Ah, dear brother, why have ye tarried so long from me? Alas, this wound on your head hath caught over much cold. And so then they rowed from the land; and Sir Bedivere beheld all those ladies go from him. Then Sir Bedivere cried, Ah, my lord Arthur, what shall become of me now ye go from me, and leave me here alone among mine enemies? Comfort thyself, said the King, and do as well as thou mayest, for in me is no trust for to trust in. For I will go into the vale of Avilion, to heal me of my grievous wound. And if

thou hear never more of me, pray for my soul. But ever the queens and the ladies wept and shrieked, that it was pity to hear. And as soon as Sir Bedivere had lost the sight of the barge, he wept and wailed, and so took the forest, and so he went all that night, and in the morning he was ware betwixt two holts hoar of a chapel and an hermitage.

*Morte D'Arthur.*

## ROGER ASCHAM

### 2. LADY JANE GREY

AND one example, whether love or feare doth worke more in a child, for vertue and learning, I will gladlie report: which maie be hard with some pleasure, and folowed with more profit. Before I went into Germanie, I came to Brodegate in Lecestershire, to take my leave of that noble Ladie *Jane Grey*, to whom I was exceding moch beholdinge. Hir parentes, the Duke and Duches, with all the houshold, gentlemen and gentlewomen, were huntinge in the parke: I found her, in her chamber, readinge *Phaedon Platonis* in Greeke, and that with as moch delite, as som jentlemen wold read a merie tale in *Bocace*.<sup>1</sup> After salutation, and dewtie done, with som other taulke, I asked hir, whie she wold leese soch pastime in the parke? Smiling she answered me: I wisse, all their sporte in the parke is but a shadoe to that pleasure, that I find in *Plato*. Alas good folke, they never felt, what trewe pleasure ment. And howe came you madame, quoth I, to this deepe knowledge of pleasure, and what did chieflie allure you unto it: seinge, not many women, but verie fewe men have attained thereunto? I will tell you, quoth she, and tell you a troth, which perchance ye will mervell at. One of the greatest benefites, that ever God gave me, is, that he sent me so sharpe and severe parentes, and so jentle a scholemaster. For when I am in presence either of father or mother, whether I speake, kepe silence, sit, stand, or go, eate, drinke, be merie, or sad,

<sup>1</sup> Boccaccio.

be sowyng, plaiyng, dauncing, or doing anie thing els, I must do it, as it were, in soch weight, mesure and number, even so perfitelie, as God made the world, or else I am so sharplie taunted, so cruellie threatened, yea presentlie sometymes, with pinches, nippes, and bobbes, and other waies, which I will not name, for the honor I beare them, so without measure misordered, that I think myselfe in hell, till tyme cum, that I must go to *M. Elmer*, who teacheth me so jentlie, so pleasantlie, with soch fair allurementes to learning, that I thinke all the tyme nothing, whiles I am with him. And when I am called from him, I fall on weeping, because, whatsoever I do els but learning, is ful of grief, trouble, feare, and whole misliking unto me. And thus my booke hath bene so moch my pleasure, and bringeth dayly to me more pleasure and more, that in respect of it, all other pleasures, in very deede, be but trifles and troubles unto me. I remember this talke gladly, both bicause it is so worthie of memorie, and bicause also, it was the last talke that ever I had, and the last tyme that ever I saw that noble and worthie Ladie.

*The Scholemaster.*

## SIR THOMAS NORTH

### 3. CORIOLANUS IN EXILE

It was even twilight when he entered the city of Antium, and many people met him in the streets, but no man knew him. So he went directly to Tullus Aufidius' house, and when he came thither, he got him up straight to the chimney hearth, and sate him down, and spake not a word to any man, his face all muffled over. They of the house spying him, wondered what he should be, and yet they durst not bid him rise. For ill-favouredly muffled and disguised as he was, yet there appeared a certain majesty in his countenance and in his silence : whereupon they went to Tullus who was at supper, to tell him of the strange disguising of this man.

Tullus rose presently from the board, and coming towards him, asked him what he was, and wherefore he came. Then Martius unmuffled himself, and after he had paused awhile, making no answer, he said unto him : " If thou knowest me not yet, Tullus, and seeing me, dost not perhaps believe me to be the man I am indeed, I must of necessity bewray myself to be that I am. I am Caius Martius, who hath done to thyself particularly, and to all the Volsces generally, great hurt and mischief, which I cannot deny for my surname of Coriolanus that I bear. For I never had other benefit nor recompense of the true and painful service I have done, and the extreme dangers I have been in, but this only surname : a good memory and witness of the malice and displeasure thou shouldest bear me. Indeed the name only remaineth with me : for the rest, the envy and cruelty of the people of

Rome have taken from me, by the sufferance of the dastardly nobility and magistrates, who have forsaken me, and let me be banished by the people. This extremity hath now driven me to come as a poor suitor to take thy chimney hearth, not of any hope I have to save my life thereby. For if I had feared death, I would not have come hither to have put my life in hazard: but pricked forward with desire to be revenged of them that thus have banished me, which now I do begin, in putting my person into the hands of their enemies. Wherefore, if thou hast any heart to be recked of the injuries thy enemies have done thee, speed thee now, and let my misery serve thy turn; and so use it, as my service may be a benefit to the Volsces: promising thee, that I will fight with better good will for you, than I did when I was against you, knowing that they fight more valiantly who know the force of the enemy, than such as have never proved it. And if it be so that thou dare not, and that thou art weary to prove fortune any more: then am I also weary to live any longer. And it were no wisdom in thee to save the life of him who hath been heretofore thy mortal enemy, and whose service now can nothing help nor pleasure thee."

Tullus hearing what he said, was a marvellous glad man, and taking him by the hand, he said unto him: "Stand up, O Martius, and be of good cheer, for in proffering thyself unto us thou dost us great honour: and by this means thou mayest hope also of greater things at the Volsces' hands" So he feasted him for that time, and entertained him in the honourablest manner he could, talking with him of no other matters at that present: but within a few days after, they fell to consultation together in what sort they should begin their wars.

*Plutarch's Life of Coriolanus.*

## SIR WALTER RALEIGH

### 4. THE END OF LIFE

FOR the rest, if we seek a reason of the succession and continuance of this boundless ambition in mortal men, we may add to that which hath been already said ; That the kings and princes of the world have always laid before them, the actions, but not the ends, of those great ones which preceded them. They are always transported with the glory of the one ; but they never mind the misery of the other, till they find the experience in themselves. They neglect the advice of God, while they enjoy life, or hope it ; but they follow the counsel of death, upon his first approach. It is he that puts into man all the wisdom of the world, without speaking a word ; which God with all the words of his law, promises or threats, doth not infuse. Death which hateth and destroyeth man, is believed ; God, which hath made him and loves him, is always deferred. "I have considered," saith Solomon, "all the works that are under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit : " but who believes it, till death tells it us ? It was death, which opening the conscience of Charles the fifth, made him enjoin his son Philip to restore Navarre ; and King Francis the first of France, to command that justice should be done upon the murderers of the Protestants in Merindol and Cabrières, which till then he neglected. It is therefore death alone, that can suddenly make man to know himself. He tells the proud and insolent, that they are but abjects, and humbles them at the instant ; makes them cry, complain and repent ; yea, even to

hate their forepassed happiness. He takes the account of the rich, and proves him a beggar ; a naked beggar, which hath interest in nothing, but in the gravel that fills his mouth. He holds a glass before the eyes of the most beautiful, and makes them see therein their deformity and rottenness ; and they acknowledge it.

O eloquent, just and mighty death ! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded ; what none hath dared, thou hast done ; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised ; thou hast drawn together all the far stretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty, and ambition of man, and covered it all over with these two narrow words, *Hic jacet*.

*The History of the World (ad finem).*

## SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

### 5. THE POET AS TEACHER

Now, therein, of all sciences (I speak still of human, and according to the human conceit) is our *Poet* the *monarch*. For he doth not only show the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect unto the way, as will entice any man to enter into it: nay, he doth, as if your journey should lie through a fair vineyard, at the very first give you a cluster of grapes; that, full of that taste, you may long to pass farther. He beginneth not with obscure definitions, which must blur the margent with interpretations and load the memory with doubtfulness; but he cometh to you with words set in delightful proportion, either accompanied with or prepared for the well enchanting skill of *music*; and with a tale forsooth he cometh unto you, with a tale which holdeth children from play and old men from the chimney corner; and, pretending no more, doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue; even as a child is often brought to take most wholesome things by hiding them in such other as have a pleasant taste: which, if one should begin to tell them the nature of the *aloes* or *rhubarbarum*, they should receive, would sooner take their physic at their ears than at their mouth. So is it in men (most of whom are childish in the best things, till they be cradled in their graves); glad they will be to hear the tales of *Hercules*, *Achilles*, *Cyrus*, *Aeneas*; and hearing them must needs hear the right description of wisdom, valour and justice; which, if they had been barely (that is to say, philosophically) set out, they

would swear they be brought to school again. That imitation whereof *Poetry* is, hath the most conveniency to nature of all other: insomuch that, as *Aristotle* saith, those things which in themselves are horrible, as cruel battles, unnatural monsters, are made in poetical imitation delightful. Truly I have known men that even with reading *Amadis de Gaule*, which, God knoweth, wanteth much of a perfect Poesy, have found their hearts moved to the exercise of courtesy, liberality and especially courage. Who readeth *Aeneas* carrying old *Anchises* on his back, that wisheth not it were his fortune to perform so excellent an act? Whom doth not those words of *Turnus* move (the tale of *Turnus* having planted his image in the imagination)—

*fugientem haec terra videbit?  
Usque adeone mori miserum est?*<sup>1</sup>

*The Defence of Poesy.*

## 6. THE PRAISE OF SONG

Is it the *lyric* that most displeaseth, who with his tuned *lyre* and well accorded voice giveth praise, the reward of virtue, to virtuous acts? who giveth moral precepts and natural problems? who sometimes raiseth up his voice to the height of the heavens in singing the lauds of the immortal God? Certainly I must confess mine own barbarousness; I never heard the old song of *Percy* and *Douglas* that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet; and yet is it sung but by some blind crowder, with no rougher voice than rude style: which being so evil apparelled in the dust and cobweb of that uncivil age, what would it work, trimmed in the gorgeous eloquence of *Pindar*?

*The Defence of Poesy.*

<sup>1</sup> "Shall this land see Turnus a fugitive? Is death so very bitter?"

## RICHARD HOOKER

### 7. THE OBEDIENCE OF ANGELS

BUT now that we may lift up our eyes (as it were) from the footstool to the throne of God, and leaving these natural, consider a little the state of heavenly and divine creatures : touching Angels, which are spirits immaterial and intellectual, the glorious inhabitants of those sacred palaces, where nothing but light and blessed immortality, no shadow of matter for tears, discontentments, griefs and uncomfortable passions to work upon, but all joy, tranquillity and peace, even for ever and ever doth dwell : as in number and order they are huge, mighty and royal armies, so likewise in perfection of obedience unto that law which the Highest, whom they adore, love and imitate, hath imposed upon them, such observants they are thereof, that our Saviour himself being to set down the perfect idea of that which we are to pray and wish for on earth, did not teach to pray or wish for more than only that here it might be with us, as with them it is in heaven. God which moveth mere natural agents as an efficient only, doth otherwise move intellectual creatures, and especially his holy angels : for beholding the face of God, in admiration of so great excellency they all adore him ; and being rapt with the love of his beauty they cleave inseparably for ever unto him. Desire to resemble him in goodness, maketh them unweariable and even unsatiable in their longing to do by all means all manner good unto all the creatures of God, but especially unto the children of men : in the countenance of whose nature,

looking downward, they behold themselves beneath themselves; even as upward, in God, beneath whom themselves are, they see that character which is no where but in themselves and us resembled. Thus far even the paynims have approached; thus far they have seen into the doings of the angels of God: Orpheus confessing that "the fiery throne of God is attended on by those most industrious angels, careful how all things are performed amongst men"; and the Mirror of human wisdom<sup>1</sup> plainly teaching that God moveth angels, even as that thing doth stir man's heart which is thereunto presented amiable.

*Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Bk. i. ch. 4.

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle, *Metaph.* bk. xn. ch. 7.

## FRANCIS BACON

### 8. OF ADVERSITY

THE virtue of Prosperity is temperance; the virtue of Adversity is fortitude: which in morals is the more heroical virtue. Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament; Adversity is the blessing of the New: which carrieth the greater benediction, and the clearer revelation of God's favour. Yet even in the Old Testament, if you listen to David's harp, you shall hear as many hearse-like airs as carols; and the pencil of the Holy Ghost hath laboured more in describing the afflictions of Job than the felicities of Solomon. Prosperity is not without many fears and distastes; and Adversity is not without comforts and hopes. We see in needleworks and embroideries, it is more pleasing to have a lively work upon a sad and solemn ground, than to have a dark and melancholy work upon a lightsome ground. Judge, therefore, of the pleasure of the heart by the pleasure of the eye. Certainly virtue is like precious odours, most fragrant when they are incensed or crushed; for Prosperity doth best discover vice, but Adversity doth best discover virtue.

*Essays.*

### 9. OF FRIENDSHIP.

It had been hard for him that spake it, to have put more truth and untruth together in few words, than in that speech,  
*Whosoever is delighted in solitude is either a wild beast or a*

god. For it is most true, that a natural and secret hatred and aversion towards society, in any man, hath somewhat of the savage beast; but it is most untrue that it should have any character at all of the divine nature, except it proceed, not out of a pleasure in solitude, but out of a love and desire to sequester a man's self for a higher conversation: such as is found to have been falsely and feignedly in some of the heathens, as Epimenides the Candian, Numa the Roman, Empedocles the Sicilian, and Apollonius of Tyana, and truly and really in divers of the ancient hermits and holy fathers of the Church. But little do men perceive what solitude is, and how far it extendeth. For a crowd is not company, and faces are but a gallery of pictures, and talk but a tinkling cymbal, where there is no love. The Latin adage meeteth with it a little: *Magna civitas, magna solitudo*; because in a great town friends are scattered; so that there is not that fellowship, for the most part, which is in less neighbourhoods. But we may go further, and affirm most truly that it is a mere and miserable solitude to want true friends, without which the world is but a wilderness. And, even in this sense also of solitude, whosoever in the frame of his nature and affections is unfit for friendship, he taketh it of the beast and not from humanity.

*Essays.*

## 10. OF STUDIES

STUDIES serve for delight, for ornament and for ability. Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business; for expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one; but the general counsels and the plots and marshalling of affairs come best from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules is the humour of a scholar. They perfect nature and

are perfected by experience ; for natural abilities are like natural plants that need pruning by study, and studies themselves do give forth directions too much at large except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men condemn studies ; simple men admire them ; and wise men use them. For they teach not their own use ; but that is a wisdom without them and above them, won by observation.

Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested. That is, some books are to be read only in parts ; others to be read, but not curiously ; and some few to be read wholly and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others, but that would be only in the less important arguments and the meaner sort of books. Else distilled books are, like common distilled waters, flashy things.

Reading maketh a full man ; conference a ready man ; and writing an exact man, and therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory ; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit ; and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know that he doth not.

*Essays.*

## II. CHARACTER OF KING HENRY THE SEVENTH

No doubt in him, as in a.l men and most of all in kings, his fortune wrought upon his nature and his nature upon his fortune. He attained to the crown, not only from a private fortune, which might endow him with moderation, but also from the fortune of an exiled man, which had quickened in him all seeds of observation and industry. And his times, being rather prosperous than calm, had raised his confidence by success but almost marred his nature by troubles. His wisdom, by often evading from

perils, was turned rather into a dexterity to deliver himself from dangers when they pressed him, than into a providence to prevent and remove them afar off. And even in nature the sight of his mind was like some sights of eyes—rather strong at hand than to carry afar off. For his wit increased upon the occasion; and so much the more if the occasion were sharpened by danger. Again, whether it were the shortness of his foresight or the strength of his will or the dazzling of his suspicions or what it was, certain it is that the perpetual troubles of his fortunes, there being no more matter out of which they grew, could not have been without some great defects and main errors in his nature, customs and proceedings, which he had enough to do to save and help with a thousand little industries and watches. But those do best appear in the story itself. Yet take him with all his defects, if a man should compare him with the kings his concurrents in France and Spain, he shall find him more politic than Lewis the Twelfth of France, and more entire and sincere than Ferdinando of Spain. But if you shall change Lewis the Twelfth for Lewis the Eleventh who lived a little before, then the consort is more perfect. For that Lewis the Eleventh, Ferdinando and Henry may be esteemed for the *tres magi* of kings of those ages. To conclude, if this king did no greater matters, it was long of himself: for what he minded he compassed.

He was a comely personage, a little above just stature, well and straight limbed, but slender. His countenance was reverend and a little like a churchman; and as it was not strange or dark, so neither was it winning or pleasing, but as the face of one well disposed. But it was to the disadvantage of the painter, for it was best when he spake.

His worth may bear a tale or two, that may put upon him somewhat that may seem divine. When the Lady Margaret his mother had divers great suitors for marriage, she dreamed one night that one in the likeness of a bishop in pontifical habit did tender her Edmund, earl of Richmond, the king's father, for her husband; neither had she ever any child but the king though she had three husbands.

One day when King Henry the Sixth whose innocency gave him holiness, was washing his hands at a great feast and cast his eye upon King Henry, then a young youth, he said: "This is the lad that shall possess quietly that that we now strive for." But that that was truly divine in him was that he had the fortune of a true Christian, as well as of a great king, in living exercised and dying repentant; so as he had a happy warfare in both conflicts, both of sin and the cross.

He was born at Pembroke Castle, and lieth buried at Westminster in one of the stateliest and daintiest monuments of Europe, both for the chapel and for the sepulchre. So that he dwelleth more richly dead in the monument of his tomb than he did alive in Richmond or any of his palaces. I could wish he did the like in this monument of his fame.

*History of the Reign of King Henry the Seventh.*

## WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

### 12. MAN

*Hamlet.* I have of late—but wherefore I know not—lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises ; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o’erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man ! how noble in reason ! how infinite in faculty ! in form and moving how express and admirable ! in action how like an angel ! in apprehension how like a god ! the beauty of the world ! the paragon of animals ! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust ? Man delights not me : no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

*Hamlet*, Act ii. Scene 2.

### 13. THE ACTOR’S ART

*Hamlet.* Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue : but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently ; for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, the whirlwind of passion, you must

acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise. I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant; it out-herods Herod : pray you, avoid it.

*First Player.* I warrant your honour.

*Hamlet.* Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor : suit the action to the word, the word to the action ; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature : for any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere the mirror up to nature ; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve ; the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely, that neither having the accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

*First Player.* I hope we have reformed that indifferently with us, sir.

*Hamlet.* O, reform it altogether. And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them ; for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too ; though, in the meantime, some necessary question of the play be then to be considered : that's villanous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go, make you ready.

*Hamlet, Act iii. Scene 2.*

## 14. THE HUMAN INSTRUMENT

*Hamlet.* Will you play upon this pipe?

*Guildestern.* My lord, I cannot.

*Hamlet.* I pray you.

*Guildestern.* Believe me, I cannot.

*Hamlet.* I do beseech you.

*Guildestern.* I know no touch of it, my lord.

*Hamlet.* 'Tis as easy as lying: govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.

*Guildestern.* But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.

*Hamlet.* Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass: and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ; yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, yet you cannot play upon me.

*Hamlet*, Act iii. Scene 2.

## PART II.—SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

### THE BIBLE

(Authorised Version of 1611)

#### 15. PSALM XC

LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth. For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance. For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

Return, O Lord, how long? and let it repent thee

concerning thy servants. O satisfy us early with thy mercy ; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us : and establish thou the work of our hands upon us ; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

## 16. THE COUNSEL OF THE PREACHER

REMEMBER now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them ; while the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain. in the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened. And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of musick shall be brought low ; also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail : because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets : or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was : and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. . . .

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter : Fear God and keep his commandments : for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

*Ecclesiastes, xii.*

## 17. "COMFORT YE . . ."

COMFORT ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned : for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low : and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain : and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together : for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry ? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field : the grass withereth, the flower fadeth : because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it : surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth : but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

*Isaiah, xl.*

## 18. CHARITY

THOUGH I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge ; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And although I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

Charity suffereth long and is kind ; charity envieth not ; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil ; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth ; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all

things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known.

And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

1 *Corinthians*, xiii.

## BEN JONSON

### 19. SHAKESPEARE

I REMEMBER the players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakespeare, that in his writing (whatsoever he penned) he never blotted out a line. My answer hath been: "Would he had blotted a thousand," which they thought a malevolent speech. I had not told posterity this, but for their ignorance, who chose that circumstance to commend their friend by, wherein he most faulted; and to justify mine own candour: for I loved the man, and do honour his memory, on this side idolatry, as much as any. He was, indeed, honest, and of an open and free nature; had an excellent phantasy, brave notions, and gentle expressions; wherein he flowed with that facility that sometimes it was necessary he should be stopped: *Sufflammandus erat*,<sup>1</sup> as Augustus said of Haterius. His wit was in his own power, would the rule of it had been so too. Many times he fell into those things, could not escape laughter: as when he said in the person of Caesar, one speaking to him, "Caesar, thou dost me wrong." He replied, "Caesar did never wrong but with just cause," and such like, which were ridiculous. But he redeemed his vices with his virtues. There was ever more in him to be praised than to be pardoned.

*Discoveries.*

<sup>1</sup> He needed to be checked.

## THOMAS HOBBES

### 20. THE IMPORTANCE OF DEFINITIONS

SEEING that truth consisteth in the right ordering of names in our affirmations, a man that seeketh precise truth had need to remember what every name he useth stands for, and to place it accordingly, or else he will find himself entangled in words as a bird in lime twigs—the more he struggles the more belimed. And therefore in geometry, which is the only science that it hath pleased God hitherto to bestow on mankind, men begin at settling the significations of their words; which settling of significations they call definitions, and place them in the beginning of their reckoning.

By this, it appears how necessary it is for any man that aspires to true knowledge to examine the definitions of former authors; and either to correct them where they are negligently set down, or to make them himself. For the errors of definitions multiply themselves according as the reckoning proceeds, and lead men into absurdities, which at last they see, but cannot avoid without reckoning anew from the beginning, in which lie the foundations of their errors. From whence it happens that they which trust to books do as they that cast up many little sums into a greater, without considering whether those little sums were rightly cast up or not; and at last, finding the error visible and not mistrusting their first grounds, know not which way to clear themselves, but spend time in fluttering over their books, as birds that, entering by the chimney and finding

themselves inclosed in a chamber, flutter at the false light of a glass window, for want of wit to consider which way they came in. So that in the right definition of names lies the first use of speech, which is the acquisition of science; and in wrong or no definitions lies the first abuse; from which proceed all false and senseless tenets, which make those men that take their instruction from the authority of books, and not from their own meditation, to be as much below the condition of ignorant men as men endued with true science are above it. For between true science and erroneous doctrines, ignorance is in the middle. Natural sense and imagination are not subject to absurdity. Nature itself cannot err, and as men abound in copiousness of language, so they become more wise or more mad than ordinary. Nor is it possible without letters for any man to become either excellently wise, or, unless his memory be hurt by disease or ill constitution of organs, excellently foolish. For *words are wise men's counters*,—they do but reckon by them; *but they are the money of fools*, that value them by the authority of an Aristotle, a Cicero, or a Thomas, or any other doctor whatsoever, if but a man.

*The Leviathan*, Part i. ch. 4.

still in motion, and not more. But now let's say grace, and fall to breakfast. What say you, scholar, to the providence of an old angler? Does not this meat taste well? and was not this place well chosen to eat it? for this sycamore tree will shade us from the sun's heat.

*Venator.* All excellent good; and my stomach excellent good, too. And I now remember, and find that true which devout Lessius says, "that poor men, and those that fast often, have much more pleasure in eating than rich men and gluttons, that always feed before their stomachs are empty of their last meat and call for more; for by that means they rob themselves of that pleasure that hunger brings to poor men." And I do seriously approve of that saying of yours, "that you had rather be a civil, well-governed, well-grounded, temperate, poor angler, than a drunken lord"; but I hope there is none such. However, I am certain of this, that I have been at many very costly dinners that have not afforded me half the content that this has done; for which I thank God and you.

*The Complete Angler.*

## SIR THOMAS BROWNE

### 22. OBLIVION

BUT the iniquity of oblivion blindly scattereth her poppy, and deals with the memory of men without distinction to merit of perpetuity. Who can but pity the founder of the pyramids? Herostratus lives that burnt the temple of Diana, he is almost lost that built it. Time has spared the epitaph of Adrian's horse, confounded that of himself. In vain we compute our felicities by the advantage of our good names, since bad have equal durations, and Thersites is like to live as long as Agamemnon. Who knows whether the best of men be known, or whether there be not more remarkable persons forgot, than any that stand remembered in the known account of time? Without the favour of the everlasting register, the first man had been as unknown as the last, and Methuselah's long life had been his only chronicle.

Oblivion is not to be hired. The greater part must be content to be as though they had not been, to be found in the register of God, not in the record of man. Twenty-seven names make up the first story before the flood, and the recorded names ever since contain not one living century. The number of the dead long exceedeth all that shall live. The night of time far surpasseth the day, and who knows when was the equinox? Every hour adds unto that current arithmetic which scarce stands one moment. . . .

Darkness and light divide the course of time, and oblivion shares with memory a great part even of our living beings ;

we slightly remember our felicities, and the smartest strokes of affliction leave but short smart upon us. Sense endureth no extremities, and sorrows destroy us or themselves. To weep into stones are fables. Afflictions induce callosities; miseries are slippery, or fall like snow upon us, which notwithstanding is no unhappy stupidity. To be ignorant of evils to come, and forgetful of evils past, is a merciful provision in nature, whereby we digest the mixture of our few and evil days, and, our delivered senses not relapsing into cutting remembrances, our sorrows are not kept raw by the edge of repetitions. . . .

There is nothing strictly immortal, but immortality. Whatever hath no beginning may be confident of no end;—which is the peculiar of that necessary essence that cannot destroy itself;—and the highest strain of omnipotency, to be so powerfully constituted as not to suffer even from the power of itself: all others have a dependent being and within the reach of destruction. But the sufficiency of Christian immortality frustrates all earthly glory, and the quality of either state after death makes a folly of posthumous memory. God who can only destroy our souls, and hath assured our resurrection, either of our bodies or names hath directly promised no duration. Wherein there is so much of chance, that the boldest expectants have found unhappy frustration; and to hold long subsistence, seems but a scape in oblivion. But man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave, solemnizing natiivities and deaths with equal lustre, nor omitting ceremonies of bravery in the infamy of his nature.

*Urn-Burial*, chap. v.

## JOHN MILTON

### 23. A POET'S ASPIRATION

THE thing which I had to say, and those intentions which have lived within me ever since I could conceive myself anything worth to my country, I return to crave excuse that urgent reason hath plucked from me by an abortive and foredated discovery. And the accomplishment of them lies now but in a power above man's to promise ; but that none hath by more studious ways endeavoured, and with more unwearied spirit that none shall, that I dare almost aver of myself, as far as life and free leisure will extend ; and that the land had once enfranchised herself from this impertinent yoke of prelaty, under whose inquisitorious and tyrannical chancery no free and splendid wit can flourish. Neither do I think it shame to covenant with any knowing reader, that for some few years yet I may go on trust with him toward the payment of what I am now indebted, as being a work not to be raised from the heat of youth or the vapours of wine ; like that which flows at waste from the pen of some vulgar amourist or the trencher-fury of a rhyming parasite ; nor to be obtained by the invocation of Dame Memory and her siren daughters ; but by devout prayer to that eternal Spirit, who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his Seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases. To this must be added industrious and select reading, steady observation, insight into all seemly and generous arts and affairs ; till which in some measure be compassed at mine

own peril and cost, I refuse not to sustain this expectation from as many as are not loth to hazard so much credulity upon the best pledges that I can give them.

*The Reason of Church Government.*

## 24. BOOKS

I DENY not but that it is of greatest concernment in the church and commonwealth, to have a vigilant eye how books demean themselves, as well as men; and thereafter to confine, imprison, and do sharpest justice on them as malefactors; for books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a progeny of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are; nay, they do preserve as in a vial the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous dragon's teeth: and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men. And yet, on the other hand, unless wariness be used, as good almost kill a man as kill a good book. who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were, in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the earth; but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life.

*Areopagitica.*

## 25. TRUE VIRTUE

As therefore the state of man now is; what wisdom can there be to choose, what continence to forbear, without the knowledge of evil? He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is

truly better, he is the true warfaring Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and seeks her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat. Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world, we bring impurity much rather; that which purifies us is trial, and trial is by what is contrary. That virtue therefore, which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evil, and knows not the utmost that vice promises to her followers, and rejects it, is but a blank virtue, not a pure; her whiteness is but an excremental whiteness; which was the reason why our sage and serious poet Spenser, (whom I dare be known to think a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas,) describing true temperance under the person of Guion, brings him in with his palmer through the cave of Mammon, and the bower of earthly bliss, that he might see and know, and yet abstain.

*Ibid.*

## 26. THE ENGLISH NATION

LORDS and Commons of England! consider what nation it is whereof ye are, and whereof ye are the governors: a nation not slow and dull, but of a quick, ingenious, and piercing spirit; acute to invent, subtile and sinewy to discourse, not beneath the reach of any point the highest that human capacity can soar to. Therefore the studies of learning in her deepest sciences have been so ancient, and so eminent among us, that writers of good antiquity and able judgement have been persuaded that even the school of Pythagoras, and the Persian wisdom, took beginning from the old philosophy of this island. . . . Now once again by all concurrence of signs, and by the general instinct of holy and devout men, as they daily and solemnly express their thoughts, God is decreeing to begin some new and great period in his church, even to the reforming of the reformation itself; what does he then but reveal himself to his

servants, and as his manner is, first to his Englishmen? I say, as his manner is, first to us, though we mark not the method of his counsels, and are unworthy. Behold now this vast city, a city of refuge, the mansion-house of liberty, encompassed and surrounded with his protection; the shop of war hath not there more anvils and hammers working, to fashion out the plates and instruments of armed justice in defence of beleaguered truth, than there be pens and heads there, sitting by their studious lamps, musing, searching, revolving new notions and ideas wherewith to present, as with their homage and their fealty, the approaching reformation: others as fast reading, trying all things, assenting to the force of reason and convincement. What could a man require more from a nation so pliant and so prone to seek after knowledge? What wants there to such a towardly and pregnant soil, but wise and faithful labourers, to make a knowing people, a nation of prophets, of sages, and of worthies? We reckon more than five months yet to harvest; there need not be five weeks, had we but eyes to lift up, the fields are white already.

*Ibid.*

## EDWARD HYDE, LORD CLARENDON

### 27. LORD FALKLAND

IN this unhappy battle was slain the Lord Viscount Falkland; a person of such prodigious parts of learning and knowledge, of that inimitable sweetness and delight in conversation, of so flowing and obliging a humanity and goodness to mankind, and of that primitive simplicity and integrity of life, that if there were no other brand upon this odious and accursed civil war, than that single loss, it must be most infamous, and execrable to all posterity.

Before this parliament, his condition of life was so happy that it was hardly capable of improvement. Before he came to be twenty years of age, he was master of a noble fortune, which descended to him by the gift of a grandfather, without passing through his father or mother, who were then both alive, and not well enough contented to find themselves passed by in the descent. His education for some years had been in Ireland, where his father was Lord Deputy; so that when he returned into England, to the possession of his fortune, he was unentangled with any acquaintance, or friends, which usually grow up by the custom of conversation; and therefore was to make a pure election of his company; which he chose by other rules than were prescribed to the young nobility of that time. And it cannot be denied, though he admitted some few to his friendship for the agreeableness of their natures, and their undoubted affection to him, that his familiarity and friendship, for the most part, was with men of the most eminent and sublime parts, and of untouched reputation in point of integrity; and such men had a title to his bosom.

He was a great cherisher of wit, and fancy, and good parts, in any man ; and, if he found them clouded with poverty or want, a most liberal and bountiful patron towards them, even above his fortune ; of which, in those administrations, he was such a dispenser, as, if he had been trusted with it to such uses, and if there had been the least of vice in his expense, he might have been thought too prodigal. He was constant and pertinacious in whatsoever he resolved to do, and not to be wearied by any pains that were necessary to that end. And therefore having once resolved not to see London, which he loved above all places, till he had perfectly learned the Greek tongue, he went to his own house in the country, and pursued it with that indefatigable industry, that it will not be believed in how short a time he was master of it, and accurately read all the Greek historians.

In this time, his house being within little more than ten miles of Oxford, he contracted familiarity and friendship with the most polite and accurate men of that university ; who found such an immenseness of wit, and such a solidity of judgment in him, so infinite a fancy, bound in by a most logical ratiocination, such a vast knowledge that he was not ignorant in any thing, yet such an excessive humility, as if he had known nothing, that they frequently resorted, and dwelt with him, as in a college situated in a purer air ; so that his house was a university in a less volume ; whither they came not so much for repose as study ; and to examine and refine those grosser propositions, which laziness and consent made current in vulgar conversation. . . .

From the entrance into this unnatural war, his natural cheerfulness and vivacity grew clouded, and a kind of sadness and dejection of spirit stole upon him, which he had never been used to : yet being one of those who believed that one battle would end all differences, and that there would be so great a victory on one side, that the other would be compelled to submit to any conditions from the victor (which supposition and conclusion generally sank into the minds of most men, and prevented the looking after many advantages that might then have been laid hold of), he

resisted those indispositions, *et in luctu, bellum inter remedia erat*.<sup>1</sup> But after the King's return from Brentford, and the furious resolution of the two Houses not to admit any treaty for peace, those indispositions which had before touched him, grew into a perfect habit of uncheerfulness; and he, who had been so exactly easy and affable to all men, that his face and countenance was always present, and vacant to his company, and held any cloudiness, and less pleasantness of the visage, a kind of rudeness or incivility, became, on a sudden, less communicable; and thence very sad, pale, and exceedingly affected with the spleen. In his clothes and habit, which he had minded before always with more neatness, and industry, and expense, than is usual to so great a soul, he was not now only incurious, but too negligent; and in his reception of suitors, and the necessary or casual addresses to his place, so quick, and sharp, and severe, that there wanted not some men (strangers to his nature and disposition) who believed him proud and imperious; from which no mortal man was ever more free. . . .

On the morning before the battle, as always upon action, he was very cheerful, and put himself into the first rank of the Lord Byron's regiment, then advancing upon the enemy, who had lined the hedges on both sides with musketeers; from whence he was shot with a musket in the lower part of the belly; and in the instant falling from his horse, his body was not found till the next morning; till when, there was some hope he might have been a prisoner; though his nearest friends, who knew his temper, received small comfort from that imagination. Thus fell that incomparable young man, in the four and thirtieth year of his age, having so much dispatched the true business of life, that the eldest rarely attain to that immense knowledge, and the youngest enter not into the world with more innocence: whosoever leads such a life needs be the less anxious upon how short warning it is taken from him.

*History of the Great Rebellion, Book vii.*

<sup>1</sup> "And in the general misery war itself might be a remedy."

## JEREMY TAYLOR

### 28. SIMILITUDES

#### *Prayer*

FOR so have I seen a Lark rising from his bed of grass, and soaring upwards, singing as he rises, and hopes to get to Heaven, and climb above the clouds; but the poor bird was beaten back with the loud sighings of an eastern wind, and his motion made irregular and unconstant, descending more at every breath of the tempest, than it could recover by the libration and frequent weighing of its wings; till the little creature was forced to sit down and pant, and stay till the storm was over; and then it made a prosperous flight, and did rise and sing, as if it had learned music and motion from an angel as he passed sometimes through the air about his ministries here below: so is the prayer of a good man.

*Sermons.*

#### *Human Life*

BUT as when the Sun approaches towards the gates of the morning, he first opens a little eye of Heaven, and sends away the spirits of darkness, and gives light to a cock, and calls up the lark to matins, and by and by gilds the fringes of a cloud, and peeps over the eastern hills, thrusting out his golden horns, like those which bedecked the brows of Moses, when he was forced to wear a veil because himself had seen the face of God; and still, while a man tells the

story, the Sun gets up higher, till he shows a fair face and a full light, and then he shines one whole day, under a cloud often, and sometimes weeping great and little showers, and sets quickly : so is a man's reason and his life.

*Holy Dying*, chap. i.

### *Man's Portion*

So have I seen a Rose newly springing from the clefts of its hood, and at first it was fair as the morning, and full with the dew of Heaven as a lamb's fleece ; but when a ruder breath had forced open its virgin modesty and dismantled its too youthful and unripe retirements, it began to put on darkness and decline to softness and the symptoms of a sickly age ; it bowed the head and broke its stalk, and at night, having lost some of its leaves and all its beauty, it fell into the portion of weeds and outworn faces.

*Holy Dying*, chap. i.

## 29. MEMENTO MORI

HE that would die well, must always look for death, every day knocking at the gates of the grave ; and then the gates of the grave shall never prevail against him, to do him mischief. This was the advice of all the wise and good men of the world, who especially in the days and periods of their joy in festival egressions, chose to throw some ashes into their chalices, some sober remembrances of their fatal period. Such was the black shirt of Saladin ; the tombstone presented to the emperor of Constantinople on his coronation-day ; the Bishop of Rome's two reeds, with flax and a wax taper ; the Egyptian skeleton served up at feasts ; and Trimalcion's banquet in Petronius, in which was brought in the image of a dead man's bones of silver, with spondyles exactly returning to every one of the guests, and saying to

every one, that you and you must die, and look not upon one another, for every one is equally concerned in this sad representment. These in fantastic semblances declare a severe counsel and useful meditation ; and it is not easy for a man to be gay in his imagination, or to be drunk with joy or wine, pride or revenge, who considers sadly, that he must ere long dwell in a house of darkness and dishonour, and his body must be the inheritance of worms, and his soul must be what he pleases, even as a man makes it here by his living, good or bad.

*Holy Dying*, chap. ii.

## ABRAHAM COWLEY

### 30. THE LOVE OF POETRY

BUT how this love came to be produced in me so early is a hard question. I believe I can tell the particular little chance that filled my head first with such chimes of verse as have never since left ringing there. For I remember when I began to read, and to take some pleasure in it, there was wont to lie in my mother's parlour (I know not by what accident, for she herself never in her life read any book but of devotion), but there was wont to lie Spenser's works; this I happened to fall upon, and was infinitely delighted with the stories of the knights and giants and monsters and brave houses which I found everywhere there (though my understanding had little to do with all this); and by degrees with the tinkling of the rhyme and dance of the numbers, so that I think I had read him all over before I was twelve years old. . . . With these affections of mind, and my heart wholly set upon letters, I went to the university, but was soon torn from thence by that violent public storm which would suffer nothing to stand where it did, but rooted up every plant, even from the princely cedars to me, the hyssop. Yet I had as good fortune as could have befallen me in such a tempest; for I was cast by it into the family of one of the best persons, and into the court of one of the best princesses of the world. Now though I was here engaged in ways most contrary to the original design of my life, that is, into much company and no small business, and into a daily sight of greatness, both militant and triumphant, for that was the state then of the English and French Courts; yet all this was so far from altering my opinion that it only

added the confirmation of reason to that which was before but natural inclination. I saw plainly all the paint of that kind of life, the nearer I came to it; and that beauty which I did not fall in love with when, for aught I knew, it was real, was not like to bewitch or entice me when I saw that it was adulterate.

*Essays.*

### 31. FUNERAL OF OLIVER CROMWELL

It was the funeral day of the late man who made himself to be called Protector. And though I bore but little affection either to the memory of him, or to the trouble and folly of all public pageantry, yet I was forced by the importunity of my company to go along with them, and be a spectator of that solemnity, the expectation of which had been so great, that it was said to have brought some very curious persons (and no doubt singular virtuosos) as far as from the mount in Cornwall and from the Orcades. I found there had been much more cost bestowed than either the dead man, or indeed death itself, could deserve. There was a mighty train of black assistants, among which too divers princes in the persons of their ambassadors (being infinitely afflicted for the loss of their brother) were pleased to attend: the hearse was magnificent, the idol crowned, and (not to mention all other ceremonies which are practised at royal interments, and therefore by no means could be omitted here), the vast multitude of spectators made up, as it uses to do, no small part of the spectacle itself.

But yet, I know not how, the whole was so managed that methought it somewhat represented the life of him for whom it was made; much noise, much tumult, much expense, much magnificence, much vain-glory; briefly, a great show, and yet, after all this, but an ill sight. At last (for it seemed long to me, and like his short reign too, very tedious) the whole scene passed by, and I retired back to my chamber, weary and, I think, more melancholy than any of the mourners.

## SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE

### 32. MUSIC AND POETRY

WHETHER it be that the fierceness of the Gothic humours or noise of their perpetual wars frightened it away, or that the unequal mixture of the modern languages would not bear it; certain it is that the great heights and excellency both of poetry and music fell with the Roman learning and empire, and have never since recovered the admiration and applauses that before attended them. Yet, such as they are amongst us, they must be confessed to be the softest and sweetest, the most general and most innocent amusements of common time and life. They still find room in the courts of princes and the cottages of shepherds. They serve to revive and animate the dead calm of poor or idle lives, and to allay or direct the violent passions and perturbations of the greatest and the busiest men. And both these effects are of equal use to human life; for the mind of man is like the sea, which is neither agreeable to the beholder nor the voyager in a calm or in a storm, but is so to both when a little agitated by gentle gales; and so the mind, when moved by soft and easy passions and affections. I know very well that many who pretend to be wise by the forms of being grave, are apt to despise both poetry and music as toys and trifles too light for the use or entertainment of serious men. But whoever find themselves wholly insensible to these charms, would I think do well to keep their own counsel, for fear of reproaching their own temper and bringing the goodness of their natures, if not of their understandings, into question;

it may be thought at least an ill sign, if not an ill constitution, since some of the fathers went so far as to esteem the love of music a sign of predestination, as a thing divine and reserved for the felicities of heaven itself. While this world lasts, I doubt not but the pleasure and requests of these two entertainments will do so too : and happy those that content themselves with these, or any other so easy and so innocent ; and do not trouble the world or other men, because they cannot be quiet themselves, though nobody hurts them !

When all is done, human life is at the greatest and the best but like a froward child, that must be played with and humoured a little to keep it quiet till it falls asleep, and then the care is over.

*Miscellanea.*

## JOHN BUNYAN

### 33. THE CELESTIAL CITY

#### I. A DISTANT VIEW

By this time the Pilgrims had a desire to go forwards, and the Shepherds a desire they should; so they walked together towards the end of the mountains. Then said the Shepherds one to another, Let us here shew to the Pilgrims the gate of the Celestial City, if they have skill to look through our perspective glass. The Pilgrims then lovingly accepted the motion; so they had them to the top of an high hill, called Clear, and gave them their glass to look. 460

Then they essayed to look; but the remembrance of that last thing that the Shepherds had shewed them made their hands shake, by means of which impediment they could not look steadily through the glass; yet they thought they saw something like the gate, and also some of the glory of the place.

#### II. THE PILGRIMS DRAW NEAR

Now upon the bank of the river, on the other side, they saw the two shining men again, who there waited for them. Wherefore being come up out of the river, they saluted them, saying, We are ministering Spirits, sent forth to minister for those that shall be Heirs of Salvation. Thus they went along towards the gate.

Now you must note, that the City stood upon a mighty hill; but the Pilgrims went up that hill with ease, because they had these two men to lead them up by the arms; they

had likewise left their mortal garments behind them in the river ; for though they went in with them, they came out without them. They therefore went up here with much agility and speed, though the foundation upon which the City was framed was higher than the clouds ; they therefore went up through the regions of the air, sweetly talking as they went, being comforted because they safely got over the river, and had such glorious companions to attend them.

The talk they had with the shining ones was about the glory of the place ; who told them that the beauty and glory of it was inexpressible. There, said they, is the Mount Sion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect. You are going now, said they, to the Paradise of God, wherein you shall see the tree of life, and eat of the never-fading fruits thereof : and when you come there you shall have white robes given you, and your walk and talk shall be every day with the King, even all the days of eternity. There you shall not see again such things as you saw when you were in the lower regions upon the earth ; to wit, sorrow, sickness, affliction, and death ; For the former things are passed away . . .

Now while they were thus drawing towards the gate, behold a company of the Heavenly Host came out to meet them ; to whom it was said by the other two shining ones, these are the men that have loved our Lord, when they were in the world, and that have left all for his holy name ; and he hath sent us to fetch them, and we have brought them thus far on their desired journey, that they may go in and look their Redeemer in the face with joy. Then the Heavenly Host gave a great shout, saying, Blessed are they that are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb. There came out also at this time to meet them several of the King's trumpeters, clothed in white and shining raiment, who with melodious noises and loud made even the heavens to echo with their sound. Those trumpeters saluted Christian and his fellow with ten thousand welcomes from the world ; and this they did with shouting and sound of trumpet.

*The Pilgrim's Progress.*

## JOHN DRYDEN

### 34 CHAUCER

As Chaucer is the father of English poetry, so I hold him in the same degree of veneration as the Grecians held Homer, or the Romans Virgil: he is a perpetual fountain of good sense; learned in all the sciences; and therefore speaks properly on all subjects: as he knew what to say, so he knows also when to leave off. He must have been a man of a most wonderful comprehensive nature, because, as it has been truly observed of him, he has taken into the compass of his "Canterbury Tales" the various manners and humours (as we now call them) of the whole English nation, in his age. Not a single character has escaped him. All his pilgrims are severally distinguished from each other; and not only in their inclinations, but in their very physiognomies and persons. Baptista Porta could not have described their natures better than by the marks which the poet gives them. The matter and manner of their tales and of their telling are so suited to their different educations, humours and callings, that each of them would be improper in any other mouth. Even the grave and serious characters are distinguished by their several sorts of gravity: their discourses are such as belong to their age, their calling, and their breeding: such as are becoming of them, and of them only. Some of his persons are vicious, and some virtuous; some are unlearned, and some are learned. Even the ribaldry of the low characters is different: the Reeve, the Miller, and the Cook are several men, and distinguished

from each other, as much as the mincing Lady Prioress and the broad-speaking gap-toothed Wife of Bath. But enough of this: there is such a variety of game springing up before me, that I am distracted in my choice, and know not which to follow. 'Tis sufficient to say, according to the proverb, that here is God's plenty. We have our forefathers and great-grandames all before us, as they were in Chaucer's days; their general characters are still remaining in mankind, and even in England, though they are called by other names than those of Monks and Friars, and Canons, and Lady Abbesses, and Nuns: for mankind is ever the same, and nothing lost out of nature, though everything is altered.

*Fables Ancient and Modern* (Preface).

### 35. SHAKESPEARE AND JONSON

To begin, then, with Shakespeare. He was the man who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of Nature were still present to him, and he drew them, not laboriously, but luckily, when he describes anything, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation: he was naturally learned; he needed not the spectacles of books to read Nature; he looked inwards, and found her there. I cannot say he is everywhere alike; were he so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of mankind. He is many times flat, insipid; his comic wit degenerating into clenches, his serious swelling into bombast. But he is always great, when some great occasion is presented to him; no man can say he ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of poets,

*Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi*<sup>1</sup>...

As for Jonson, if we look upon him while he was himself (for

<sup>1</sup> "As high as cypresses are wont to soar among the plant wayfaring trees." Virgil, *Ecl.* i. 25.

his last plays were but his dotages), I think him the most learned and judicious writer which any theatre ever had. He was a most severe judge of himself, as well as others. One cannot say he wanted wit, but rather that he was frugal of it. In his works you find little to retrench or alter. Wit, and language, and humour also in some measure, we had before him ; but something of art was wanting to the Drama, till he came. He managed his strength to more advantage than any who preceded him. You seldom find him making love in any of his scenes, or endeavouring to move the passions ; his genius was too sullen and saturnine to do it gracefully, especially when he knew he came after those who had performed both to such an height. Humour was his proper sphere ; and in that he delighted most to represent mechanic people. He was deeply conversant in the Ancients, both Greek and Latin, and he borrowed boldly from them : there is scarce a poet or historian among the Roman authors of those times whom he has not translated in *Sejanus* and *Catiline*. But he has done his robberies so openly that one may see he fears not to be taxed by any law. He invades authors like a monarch ; and what would be theft in other poets is only victory in him. With the spoils of these writers he so represents old Rome to us, in its rites, ceremonies, and customs, that if one of their poets had written either of his tragedies, we had seen less of it than in him. If there was any fault in his language, 'twas that he weaved it too closely and laboriously in his serious plays : perhaps too, he did a little too much Romanize our tongue, leaving the words which he translated almost as much Latin as he found them : wherein, though he learnedly followed the idiom of their language, he did not enough comply with the idiom of ours. If I would compare him with Shakespeare, I must acknowledge him the more correct poet, but Shakespeare the greater wit. Shakespeare was the Homer, or father of our dramatic poets ; Jonson was the Virgil, the pattern of elaborate writing ; I admire him, but I love Shakespeare.

## 36. SATIRE

THUS far that learned critic, Barten Holyday, whose interpretation and illustrations of Juvenal are as excellent, as the verse of his translation and his English are lame and pitiful. For 'tis not enough to give us the meaning of a poet, which I acknowledge him to have performed most faithfully, but he must also imitate his genius and his numbers, as far as the English will come up to the elegance of the original. In few words, 'tis only for a poet to translate a poem. Holyday and Stapylton had not enough considered this, when they attempted Juvenal: but I forbear reflections; only I beg leave to take notice of this sentence, where Holyday says, "a perpetual grin, like that of Horace, rather angers than amends a man." I cannot give him up the manner of Horace in low satire so easily. Let the chastisement of Juvenal be never so necessary for his new kind of satire; let him declaim as wittily and sharply as he pleases; yet still the nicest and most delicate touches of satire consist in fine raillery. This, my Lord, is your particular talent, to which even Juvenal could not arrive. 'Tis not reading, 'tis not imitation of an author, which can produce this fineness, it must be inborn; it must proceed from a genius, and particular way of thinking, which is not to be taught; and therefore cannot be imitated by him who has it not from nature. How easy is it to call rogue and villain, and that wittily! But how hard to make a man appear a fool, a blockhead, or a knave, without using any of those opprobrious terms! To spare the grossness of the names, and to do the thing yet more severely, is to draw a full face, and to make the nose and cheeks stand out, and yet not to employ any depth of shadowing. This is the mystery of that noble trade, which yet no master can teach to his apprentice; he may give the rules, but the scholar is never the nearer in his practice. Neither is it true that this fineness of raillery is offensive. A witty man is tickled while he is hurt in this manner, and a fool feels it not. The occasion of an offence

may possibly be given, but he cannot take it. If it be granted, that in effect this way does more mischief; that a man is secretly wounded, and though he be not sensible himself, yet the malicious world will find it out for him; yet there is still a vast difference betwixt the slovenly butchering of a man and the fineness of a stroke that separates the head from the body, and leaves it standing in its place. A man may be capable, as Jack Ketch's wife said of his servant, of a plain piece of work, a bare hanging; but to make a malefactor die sweetly was only belonging to her husband. I wish I could apply it to myself, if the reader would be kind enough to think it belongs to me. The character of Zimri in my *Absalom* is, in my opinion, worth the whole poem: it is not bloody, but it is ridiculous enough; and he, for whom it was intended, was too witty to resent it as an injury. If I had railed I might have suffered for it justly; but I managed my own work more happily, perhaps more dexterously. I avoided the mention of great crimes, and applied myself to the representing of blindsides and little extravagancies; to which the wittier a man is, he is generally the more obnoxious. It succeeded as I wished; the jest went round, and he was laughed at in his turn who began the frolic.

*Original and Progress of Satire.*

## PART III.—EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

### JONATHAN SWIFT

#### 37. THE KING OF BROBDINGNAG'S VERDICT

HIS MAJESTY, in another audience, was at the pains to recapitulate the sum of all I had spoken; compared the questions he made with the answers I had given; then, taking me into his hands and stroking me gently, delivered himself in these words, which I shall never forget, nor the manner he spoke them in: "My little friend Grildrig, you have made a most admirable panegyric upon your country; you have clearly proved that ignorance, idleness and vice are the proper ingredients for qualifying a legislator; that laws are best explained, interpreted and applied by those whose interest and abilities lie in perverting, confounding and eluding them. I observe among you some lines of an institution which in its original might have been tolerable, but these half erased, and the rest wholly blurred and blotted by corruptions. It does not appear from all you have said how any one perfection is required toward the procurement of any one station among you; much less, that men are ennobled on account of their virtue; that priests are advanced for their piety or learning; soldiers, for their conduct or valour; judges, for their integrity; senators, for the love of their country; or counsellors, for their wisdom. As for yourself," continued the king, "who have spent the greatest part of your life in travelling, I am well disposed to hope you may hitherto have escaped many vices of your

country. But by what I have gathered from your own relation, and the answers I have with much pains wringed and extorted from you, I cannot but conclude the bulk of your natives to be the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth."

*Gulliver's Travels*, Part ii, ch. 6.

### 38. THE PROFESSION OF LAW

I SAID, there was a society of men among us bred up from their youth in the art of proving, by words multiplied for the purpose, that white is black and black is white, according as they are paid. To this society all the rest of the people are slaves. For example, if my neighbour has a mind to my cow, he has a lawyer to prove that he ought to have my cow from me. I must then hire another to defend my right, it being against all rules of law that any man should be allowed to speak for himself. Now, in this case, I who am the right owner lie under two great disadvantages: first, my lawyer being practised almost from his cradle in defending falsehood, is quite out of his element when he would be an advocate for justice, which is an unnatural office he always attempts with great awkwardness if not with ill will. The second disadvantage is that my lawyer must proceed with great caution, or else he will be reprimanded by the judge and abhorred by his brethren, as one that would lessen the practice of the law. And therefore I have but two methods to preserve my cow. The first is to gain over my adversary's lawyer with a double fee, who will then betray his client by insinuating that he has justice on his side. The second way is for my lawyer to make my cause appear as unjust as possible by allowing the cow to belong to my adversary: and this, if it be skilfully done, will certainly bespeak the favour of the bench. Now your honour is to know that the judges are persons appointed to decide all controversies of property as well as for the trial of criminals, and picked out from the most dextrous lawyers who are grown old or

lazy ; and having been biassed all their lives against truth and equity, lie under such a fatal necessity of favouring fraud, perjury and oppression, that I have known some of them refuse a large bribe from the side where justice lay rather than injure the faculty by doing anything unbecoming their nature or their office.

It is a maxim among these lawyers that whatever has been done before may legally be done again ; and therefore they take special care to record all the decisions formerly made against common justice and the general reason of mankind. These under the name of precedents they produce as authorities to justify the most iniquitous opinions ; and the judges never fail of directing accordingly.

In pleading they studiously avoid entering into the merits of the cause ; but are loud, violent and tedious in dwelling upon all circumstances which are not to the purpose. For instance, in the case already mentioned, they never desire to know what claim or title my adversary has to my cow ; but whether the said cow were red or black ; her horns long or short ; whether the field I graze her in be round or square ; whether she was milked at home or abroad ; what diseases she is subject to, and the like ; after which they consult precedents, adjourn the cause from time to time, and in ten, twenty or thirty years come to an issue.

It is likewise to be observed that this society has a peculiar cant and jargon of their own, that no other mortal can understand, and wherein all their laws are written, which they take special care to multiply ; whereby they have wholly confounded the very essence of truth and falsehood, of right and wrong ; so that it will take thirty years to decide whether the field left me by my ancestors for six generations belongs to me or to a stranger three hundred miles off.

In the trial of persons accused for crimes against the state, the method is much more short and commendable : the judge first sends to sound the disposition of those in power, after which he can easily hang or save a criminal, strictly preserving all due forms of law.

*Gulliver's Travels*, Part iv, ch. 5.

## RICHARD STEELE

### 39. TWO CHILDREN

WE were pleasing ourselves with this fantastical preferment of the young lady, when on a sudden we were alarmed with the noise of a drum, and immediately entered my little godson to give me a point of war. His Mother, between laughing and chiding, would have put him out of the room; but I would not part with him so. I found, upon conversation with him, though he was a little noisy in his mirth, that the child had excellent parts, and was a great master of all the learning on the other side eight years old. I perceived him a very great historian in *Æsop's Fables*: but he frankly declared to me his mind, "that he did not delight in that learning, because he did not believe they were true"; for which reason I found he had very much turned his studies, for about a twelvemonth past, into the lives and adventures of Don Bellianis of Greece, Guy of Warwick, the Seven Champions, and other historians of that age. I could not but observe the satisfaction the father took in the forwardness of his son; and that these diversions might turn to some profit, I found the boy had made remarks which might be of service to him during the course of his whole life. He would tell you the mismanagements of John Hickathrift, find fault with the passionate temper in Bevis of Southampton, and loved Saint George for being the champion of England; and by this means had his thoughts insensibly moulded into the notions of discretion, virtue, and honour. I was extolling his accomplishments when his

mother told me that the little girl who led me in this morning was in her way a better scholar than he. "Betty," said she, "deals chiefly in fairies and sprites, and sometimes in a winter night will terrify the maids with her accounts, until they are afraid to go up to bed."

I sat with them until it was very late, sometimes in merry, sometimes in serious discourse, with this particular pleasure, which gives the only true relish to all conversation, a sense that every one of us liked each other. I went home considering the different conditions of a married life and that of a bachelor; and I must confess it struck me with a secret concern, to reflect that whenever I go off I shall leave no traces behind me. In this pensive mood I return to my family; that is to say, to my maid, my dog, and my cat, who only can be the better or worse for what happens to me.

*Tatler*, No. 95.

#### 40. MY FIRST GRIEF

THE first sense of sorrow I ever knew was upon the death of my father, at which time I was not quite five years of age; but was rather amazed at what all the house meant than possessed with a real understanding why nobody was willing to play with me. I remember I went into the room where his body lay, and my mother sat weeping alone by it. I had my battledore in my hand, and fell a-beating the coffin, and calling papa; for, I know not how, I had some slight idea that he was locked up there. My mother caught me in her arms, and transported beyond all patience of the silent grief she was before in, she almost smothered me in her embraces; and told me in a flood of tears, "Papa could not hear me, and would play with me no more, for they were going to put him under ground, whence he could never come to us again." She was a very beautiful woman, of a noble spirit, and there was a dignity in her grief amidst all the wildness of her transport which, methought, struck me

with an instinct of sorrow, that, before I was sensible of what it was to grieve, seized my very soul, and has made pity the weakness of my heart ever since. The mind in infancy is, methinks, like the body in embryo; and receives impressions so forcible that they are as hard to be removed by reason as any mark with which a child is born is to be taken away by any future application. Hence it is that good nature in me is no merit; but having been so frequently overwhelmed with her tears before I knew the cause of any affliction, or could draw defences from my own judgment, I imbibed commiseration, remorse, and an unmanly gentleness of mind, which has since insnared me into ten thousand calamities; from whence I can reap no advantage, except it be that, in such a humour as I am now in, I can the better indulge myself in the softness of humanity, and enjoy that sweet anxiety which arises from the memory of past afflictions.

*Tatler*, No. 181.

#### 41. THE FINE GENTLEMAN

A FINISHED gentleman is perhaps the most uncommon of all the great characters in life. Besides the natural endowments with which this distinguished man is to be born, he must run through a long series of education. Before he makes his appearance and shines in the world, he must be principled in religion, instructed in all the moral virtues, and led through the whole course of the polite arts and sciences. He should be no stranger to courts and to camps; he must travel to open his mind, to enlarge his views, to learn the policies and interests of foreign states, as well as to fashion and polish himself, and to get rid of national prejudice; of which every country has its share. To all these more essential improvements, he must not forget to add the fashionable ornaments of life, such as are the languages and the bodily exercises most in vogue: neither would I have him think even dress itself beneath his notice.

It is no very uncommon thing in the world to meet with men of probity ; there are likewise a great many men of honour to be found : men of courage, men of sense, and men of letters are frequent. But a true fine gentleman is what one seldom sees. He is properly a compound of the various good qualities that embellish mankind. As the great poet animates all the different parts of learning by the force of his genius, and irradiates all the compass of his knowledge by the lustre and brightness of his imagination ; so all the great and solid perfections of life appear in the finished gentleman with a beautiful gloss and varnish ; every thing he says or does is accompanied with a manner, or rather a charm, that draws the admiration and good-will of every beholder.

*Guardian*, No. 34.

## JOSEPH ADDISON

### 42. REFLECTIONS IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

FOR my own part, though I am always serious, I do not know what it is to be melancholy; and can therefore take a view of nature in her deep and solemn scenes, with the same pleasure as in her most gay and delightful ones. By this means I can improve myself with those objects which others consider with terror. When I look upon the tombs of the great, every emotion of envy dies in me; when I read the epitaphs of the beautiful, every inordinate desire goes out; when I meet with the grief of parents upon a tombstone, my heart melts with compassion; when I see the tomb of the parents themselves, I consider the vanity of grieving for those whom we must <sup>AN</sup> quietly follow; when I see kings lying by those who deposed <sup>the</sup> mo<sup>st</sup>, when I consider rival wits placed side by side, or <sup>the</sup> sides th' men that divided the world with their contests and disputes, I reflect with sorrow and astonishment on the little competitions, factions, and debates of mankind. When I read the several dates of the tombs, of some that died yesterday, and some six hundred years ago, I consider that great day when we shall all of us be contemporaries, and make our appearance together.

*Spectator, No. 26.*

### 43. THE VISION OF MIRZA

HE then led me to the highest pinnacle of the rock, and placed me on the top of it. Cast thy eyes eastward, said he,

and tell me what thou seest. I see, said I, a huge valley and a prodigious tide of water rolling through it. The valley that thou seest, said he, is the vale of misery, and the tide of water that thou seest is part of the great tide of eternity. What is the reason, said I, that the tide I see rises out of a thick mist at one end, and again loses itself in a thick mist at the other? What thou seest, says he, is that portion of eternity which is called time, measured out by the sun, and reaching from the beginning of the world to its consummation. Examine now, said he, this sea that is thus bounded with darkness at both ends, and tell me what thou discoverest in it. I see a bridge, said I, standing in the midst of the tide. The bridge thou seest, said he, is human life; consider it attentively. Upon a more leisurely survey of it, I found that it consisted of threescore and ten entire arches, with several broken arches, which added to those that were entire, made up the number about an hundred. As I was counting the arches the genius told me that this bridge consisted at first of a thousand arches; but that a great flood swept away the rest, and left the bridge in the ruinous condition I now beheld it. But tell me further, said he, what thou discoverest on it. I see multitudes of people passing over it, said I, and a black cloud hanging on each end of it. As I looked more attentively, I saw several of the passengers dropping through the bridge, into the great tide that flowed underneath it; and upon further examination, perceived there were innumerable trap-doors that lay concealed in the bridge, which the passengers no sooner trod upon, but they fell through them into the tide and immediately disappeared. These hidden pitfalls were set very thick at the entrance of the bridge, so that throngs of people no sooner broke through the cloud, but many of them fell into them. They grew thinner towards the middle, but multiplied and lay closer together towards the end of the arches that were entire.

There were indeed some persons, but their number was very small, that continued a kind of hobbling march on the broken arches, but fell through one after another, being quite tired and spent with so long a walk.

I passed some time in the contemplation of this wonderful structure, and the great variety of objects which it presented. My heart was filled with a deep melancholy to see several dropping unexpectedly in the midst of mirth and jollity, and catching at everything that stood by them to save themselves. Some were looking up towards the heavens in a thoughtful posture, and in the midst of a speculation stumbled and fell out of sight. Multitudes were very busy in the pursuit of baubles that glittered in their eyes and danced before them, but often when they thought themselves within the reach of them, their footing failed and down they sunk.

*Spectator*, No. 159.

#### 44. SIR ROGER AT THE ABBEY

As we went up the body of the church the knight pointed at the trophies upon one of the new monuments, and cried out, "A brave man I warrant him!" Passing afterwards by Sir Cloudsly Shovel, he flung his hand that way, and cried, "Sir Cloudsly Shovel! a very gallant man!" As we stood before Busby's tomb, the knight uttered himself again after the same manner, "Dr. Busby, a great man! he whipped my grandfather; a very great man! I should have gone to him myself, if I had not been a blockhead; a very great man!"

We were immediately conducted into the little chapel on the right hand. Sir Roger planting himself at our historian's elbow, was very attentive to everything he said, particularly to the account he gave us of the lord who had cut off the king of Morocco's head. Among several other figures, he was very well pleased to see the statesman Cecil upon his knees; and, concluding them all to be great men, was conducted to the figure which represents that martyr to good housewifery, who died by the prick of a needle. Upon our interpreter's telling us, that she was a maid of honour to Queen Elizabeth, the knight was very inquisitive into her name and family; and after having regarded her finger for

some time, "I wonder, (says he,) that Sir Richard Baker has said nothing of her in his Chronicle."

We were then conveyed to the two coronation-chairs, where my old friend, after having heard that the stone underneath the most ancient of them, which was brought from Scotland, was called Jacob's Pillow, sat himself down in the chair; and looking like the figure of an old Gothic king, asked our interpreter what authority they had to say that Jacob had ever been in Scotland? The fellow, instead of returning him an answer, told him, that he hoped his Honour would pay his forfeit. I could observe Sir Roger a little ruffled upon being thus trepanned; but our guide not insisting upon his demand, the knight soon recovered his good humour, and whispered in my ear, that if Will. Wimble were with us, and saw those two chairs, it would go hard but he would get a tobacco-stopper out of one or t' other of them.

Sir Roger, in the next place, laid his hand upon Edward the Third's sword, and leaning upon the pommel of it, gave us the whole history of the Black Prince; concluding, that in Sir Richard Baker's opinion, Edward the Third was one of the greatest princes that ever sat upon the English throne.

We were then shown Edward the Confessor's tomb; upon which Sir Roger acquainted us, that he was the first that touched for the Evil; and afterwards Henry the Fourth's, upon which he shook his head, and told us, there was fine reading of the casualties of that reign.

Our conductor then pointed to that monument where there is the figure of one of our English kings without an head; and upon giving us to know, that the head, which was of beaten silver, had been stolen away several years since: "Some Whig, I'll warrant you, (says Sir Roger); you ought to lock up your kings better; they will carry off the body too, if you do not take care."

The glorious names of Henry the Fifth and Queen Elizabeth gave the knight great opportunities of shining, and of doing justice to Sir Richard Baker, who, as our knight observed

with some surprise, had a great many kings in him, whose monuments he had not seen in the Abbey.

For my own part, I could not but be pleased to see the knight show such an honest passion for the glory of his country, and such a respectful gratitude to the memory of its princes.

I must not omit, that the benevolence of my good old friend, which flows out towards every one he converses with, made him very kind to our interpreter, whom he looked upon as an extraordinary man ; for which reason he shook him by the hand at parting, telling him that he should be very glad to see him at his lodgings in Norfolk-buildings, and talk over these matters with him more at leisure.

*Spectator*, No. 329.

#### 45. THE TORY FOX-HUNTER

SUPPER was no sooner served in than he took occasion, from a shoulder of mutton that lay before us, to cry up the plenty of England, which would be the happiest country in the world, provided we would live within ourselves. Upon which he expatiated on the inconveniences of trade, that carried from us the commodities of our country, and made a parcel of upstarts as rich as men of the most ancient families of England. He then declared frankly that he had always been against all treaties and alliances with foreigners. "Our wooden walls," says he, "are our security, and we may bid defiance to the whole world, especially if they should attack us when the militia is out." I ventured to reply that I had as great an opinion of the English fleet as he had ; but I could not see how they could be paid, and manned, and fitted out, unless we encouraged trade and navigation. He replied, with some vehemence, that he would undertake to prove trade would be the ruin of the English nation. I would fain have put him upon it ; but he contented himself with affirming it more eagerly, to which he added two or

three curses upon the London merchants, not forgetting the directors of the bank. After supper he asked me if I was an admirer of punch, and immediately called for a sneaker. I took this occasion to insinuate the advantages of trade by observing to him that water was the only native of England that could be made use of on this occasion, but that the lemons, the brandy, the sugar, and the nutmeg were all foreigners. This put him into confusion ; but the landlord, who overheard me, brought him off, by affirming, that for constant use, there was no liquor like a cup of English water, provided it had malt enough in it.

*Freeholder*, No. 22.

## SAMUEL JOHNSON

### 46. LETTER TO LORD CHESTERFIELD

February 7, 1755.

MY LORD,—I have been lately informed, by the proprietor of “The World,” that two papers, in which my Dictionary is recommended to the public, were written by your lordship. To be so distinguished is an honour, which, being very little accustomed to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address, and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *Le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*;—that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending; but I found my attendance so little encouraged, that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your lordship in public, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

Seven years, my lord, have now past, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it, at last, to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of

favour. Such treatment I did not expect ; for I never had a patron before.

The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind ; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it ; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it ; till I am known and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess my obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron, which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less ; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation,

MY LORD,

Your lordship's most humble, most obedient servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

*Boswell's Life of Johnson.*

#### 47. BOOKS AND LIFE

*Books*, says Bacon, *can never teach the use of books*. The student must learn by commerce with mankind to reduce his speculations to practice, and accommodate his knowledge to the purposes of life.

It is too common for those who have been bred to scholastic professions, and passed much of their time in academies where nothing but learning confers honours, to disregard every other qualification, and to imagine that they shall find mankind ready to pay homage to their knowledge

and to crowd about them for instruction. They therefore step out from their cells into the open world with all the confidence of authority and dignity of importance ; they look round about them at once with ignorance and scorn on a race of beings to whom they are equally unknown and equally contemptible, but whose manners they must imitate, and with whose opinions they must comply, if they desire to pass their time happily among them.

To lessen that disdain with which scholars are inclined to look on the common business of the world, and the unwillingness with which they condescend to learn what is not to be found in any system of philosophy, it may be necessary to consider that, though admiration is excited by abstruse researches and remote discoveries, yet pleasure is not given, nor affection conciliated, but by softer accomplishments and qualities more easily communicable to those about us. He that can only converse upon questions about which only a small part of mankind has knowledge sufficient to make them curious, must lose his days in unsocial silence and live in the crowd of life without a companion. He that can only be useful on great occasions may die without exerting his abilities, and stand a helpless spectator of a thousand vexations which fret away happiness and which nothing is required to remove but a little dexterity of conduct and readiness of expedients.

No degree of knowledge attainable by man is able to set him above the want of hourly assistance or to extinguish the desire of fond endearments and tender officiousness ; and therefore no one should think it unnecessary to learn those arts by which friendship may be gained. Kindness is preserved by a constant reciprocation of benefits or interchange of pleasures ; but such benefits only can be bestowed as others are capable to receive, and such pleasures only imparted as others are qualified to enjoy.

*The Rambler*, No. 137.

## 48. A DISSERTATION ON THE ART OF FLYING

THIS artist was sometimes visited by Rasselas, who was pleased with every kind of knowledge, imagining that the time would come when all his acquisitions should be of use to him in the open world. He came one day to amuse himself in his usual manner, and found the master busy in building a sailing chariot: he saw that the design was practicable upon a level surface, and with expressions of great esteem solicited its completion. The workman was pleased to find himself so much regarded by the prince, and resolved to gain yet higher honours. "Sir," said he, "you have seen but a small part of what the mechanic sciences can perform. I have been long of opinion, that instead of the tardy conveyance of ships and chariots, man might use the swifter migration of wings; that the fields of air are open to knowledge, and that only ignorance and idleness need crawl upon the ground."

This hint rekindled the prince's desire of passing the mountains. Having seen what the mechanist had already performed, he was willing to fancy that he could do more; yet resolved to inquire farther before he suffered hope to afflict him by disappointment. "I am afraid," said he to the artist, "that your imagination prevails over your skill, and that you now tell me rather what you wish than what you know. Every animal has his element assigned him; the birds have the air, and man and beasts the earth." "So," replied the mechanist, "fishes have the water, in which yet beasts can swim by nature, and man by art. He that can swim needs not despair to fly: to swim is to fly in a grosser fluid, and to fly is to swim in a subtler. We are only to proportion our power of resistance to the different density of matter through which we are to pass. You will be necessarily upborne by the air, if you can renew any impulse upon it faster than the air can recede from the pressure."

"But the exercise of swimming," said the prince, "is very laborious: the strongest limbs are soon wearied: I am afraid

the act of flying will be yet more violent ; and wings will be of no great use, unless we can fly further than we can swim."

"The labour of rising from the ground," said the artist, "will be great, as we see it in the heavier domestic fowls ; but, as we mount higher, the earth's attraction, and the body's gravity, will be gradually diminished, till we shall arrive at a region where the man shall float in the air without any tendency to fall ; no care will then be necessary but to move forward, which the gentlest impulse will effect. You, Sir, whose curiosity is so extensive, will easily conceive with what pleasure a philosopher, furnished with wings, and hovering in the sky, would see the earth, and all its inhabitants, rolling beneath him, and presenting to him successively, by its diurnal motion, all the countries within the same parallel. How must it amuse the pendent spectator to see the moving scene of land and ocean, cities and deserts<sup>1</sup> to survey with equal security the marts of trade and the fields of battle ; mountains infested by barbarians, and fruitful regions gladdened by plenty and lulled by peace ! How easily shall we then trace the Nile through all his passages, pass over to distant regions, and examine the face of nature from one extremity of the earth to the other."

"All this," said the prince, "is much to be desired, but I am afraid that no man will be able to breathe in these regions of speculation and tranquillity. I have been told that respiration is difficult upon lofty mountains ; yet from these precipices, though so high as to produce great tenuity of air, it is very easy to fall : therefore I suspect, that from any height, where life can be supported, there may be danger of too quick descent."

"Nothing," replied the artist, "will ever be attempted, if all possible objections must be first overcome. If you will favour my project, I will try the first flight at my own hazard. I have considered the structure of all volant animals, and find the folding continuity of the bat's wings most easily accommodated to the human form. Upon this model I shall begin my task to-morrow ; and, in a year, expect to tower into the air beyond the malice and pursuit of man.

But I will work only on this condition, that the art shall not be divulged, and that you shall not require me to make wings for any but ourselves."

"Why," said Rasselas, "should you envy others so great an advantage? All skill ought to be exerted for universal good; every man has owed much to others, and ought to repay the kindness that he has received." "If men were all virtuous," returned the artist, "I should with great alacrity teach them to fly. But what would be the security of the good if the bad could at pleasure invade them from the sky? Against an army sailing through the clouds, neither walls, mountains, nor seas, could afford security. A flight of northern savages might hover in the wind, and light with irresistible violence upon the capital of a fruitful region. Even this valley, the retreat of princes, the abode of happiness, might be violated by the sudden descent of some of the naked nations that swarm on the coast of the southern sea!"

The prince promised secrecy, and waited for the performance, not wholly hopeless of success. He visited the work from time to time, observed its progress, and remarked many ingenious contrivances to facilitate motion, and unite levity with strength. The artist was every day more certain that he should leave vultures and eagles behind him, and the contagion of his confidence seized upon the prince. In a year the wings were finished; and on a morning appointed, the maker appeared furnished for flight on a little promontory: he waved his pinions awhile to gather air, then leaped from his stand, and in an instant dropped into the lake. His wings, which were of no use in the air, sustained him in the water; and the prince drew him to land half dead with terror and vexation.

*Rasselas.*

#### 49. ADDISON

ADDISON is now to be considered as a critic; a name which the present generation is scarcely willing to allow him. His

criticism is condemned as tentative or experimental, rather than scientific; and he is considered as deciding by taste rather than by principles.

It is not uncommon for those who have grown wise through the labour of others to add a little of their own, and overlook their masters. Addison is now despised by some who perhaps would never have seen his defects, but by the lights which he afforded them. That he always wrote as he would think it necessary to write now, cannot be affirmed; his instructions were such as the characters of his readers made proper. That general knowledge which now circulates in common talk was in his time rarely to be found. Men not professing learning were not ashamed of ignorance; and in the female world any acquaintance with books was distinguished only to be censured. His purpose was to infuse literary curiosity, by gentle and unsuspected conveyance, into the gay, the idle, and the wealthy; he therefore presented knowledge in the most alluring form, not lofty and austere, but accessible and familiar. When he showed them their defects, he showed them likewise that they might be easily supplied. His attempt succeeded; inquiry was awakened, and comprehension expanded. An emulation of intellectual elegance was excited; and from this time to our own, life has been gradually exalted and conversation purified and enlarged.

Dryden had, not many years before, scattered criticism over his prefaces with very little parsimony; but though he sometimes condescended to be somewhat familiar, his manner was in general too scholastic for those who had yet their rudiments to learn and found it not easy to understand their master. His observations were framed rather for those that were learning to write, than for those that read only to talk.

An instructor like Addison was now wanting, whose remarks, being superficial, might be easily understood, and being just, might prepare the mind for more attainments. Had he presented "*Paradise Lost*" to the public with all the pomp of system and severity of science, the criticism

would perhaps have been admired and the poem still have been neglected ; but by the blandishments of gentleness and facility he has made Milton a universal favourite, with whom readers of every class think it necessary to be pleased.

As a describer of life and manners, he must be allowed to stand perhaps the first of the first rank. His humour, which, as Steele observes, is peculiar to himself, is so happily diffused as to give the grace of novelty to domestic scenes and daily occurrences. He never "outsteps the modesty of nature," nor raises merriment or wonder by the violation of truth. His figures neither divert by distortion nor amaze by aggravation. He copies life with so much fidelity that he can be hardly said to invent ; yet his exhibitions have an air so much original, that it is difficult to suppose them not merely the product of imagination.

As a teacher of wisdom, he may be confidently followed. His religion has nothing in it enthusiastic or superstitious ; he appears neither weakly credulous nor wantonly sceptical ; his morality is neither dangerously lax nor impracticably rigid. All the enchantment of fancy and all the cogency of argument are employed to recommend to the reader his real interest, the care of pleasing the Author of his being. Truth is shown sometimes as the phantom of a vision ; sometimes appears half-veiled in an allegory ; sometimes attracts regard in the robes of fancy ; and sometimes steps forth in the confidence of reason. She wears a thousand dresses, and in all is pleasing.

*Mille habet ornatus, mille decenter habet.*

His prose is the model of the middle style ; on grave subjects not formal, on light occasions not grovelling ; pure without scrupulosity, and exact without apparent elaboration : always equable and always easy, without glowing words or pointed sentences. Addison never deviates from his track to snatch a grace ; he seeks no ambitious ornaments and tries no hazardous innovations. His page is always luminous, but never blazes in unexpected splendour. It was apparently his principal endeavour to avoid all

harshness and severity of diction ; he is therefore sometimes verbose in his transitions and connections, and sometimes descends too much to the language of conversation ; yet if his language had been less idiomatical, it might have lost somewhat of its genuine Anglicism. What he attempted, he performed : he is never feeble, and he did not wish to be energetic ; he is never rapid, and he never stagnates. His sentences have neither studied amplitude nor affected brevity : his periods, though not diligently rounded, are voluble and easy. Whoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison.

*Lives of the Poets.*

## THOMAS GRAY

### 50. THE GRANDE CHARTREUSE

I OWN I have not, as yet, any where met with those grand and simple works of Art, that are to amaze one, and whose sight one is to be the better for : But those of Nature have astonished me beyond expression. In our little journey up to the Grande Chartreuse, I do not remember to have gone ten paces without an exclamation that there was no restraining : Not a precipice, not a torrent, not a cliff, but is pregnant with religion and poetry. There are certain scenes that would awe an atheist into belief, without the help of other argument. One need not have a very fantastic imagination to see spirits there at noonday : You have death perpetually before your eyes, only so far removed, as to compose the mind without frightening it. I am well persuaded St. Bruno was a man of no common genius, to choose such a situation for his retirement ; and perhaps should have been a disciple of his, had I been born in his time. You may believe Abelard and Heloise were not forgot upon this occasion : If I do not mistake, I saw you too every now and then at a distance among the trees. You seemed to call to me from the other side of the precipice, but the noise of the river below was so great, that I really could not distinguish what you said ; it seemed to have a cadence like verse. In your next you will be so good to let me know what it was.

*Letter to Mr. West, from Turin, Nov. 16, 1739.*

## 51. A SUNRISE

I MUST not close my letter without giving you one principal event of my history ; which was, that (in the course of my late tour) I set out one morning before five o'clock, the moon shining through a dark and misty autumnal air, and got to the sea-coast time enough to be at the Sun's Levee. I saw the clouds and dark vapours open gradually to right and left, rolling over one another in great smoky wreathes, and the tide (as it flowed gently in upon the sands) first whitening, then slightly tinged with gold and blue ; and all at once a little line of insufferable brightness that (before I can write these five words) was grown to half an orb, and now to a whole one, too glorious to be distinctly seen. It is very odd it makes no figure on paper ; yet I shall remember it, as long as the sun, or at least as long as I endure. I wonder whether anybody ever saw it before ? I hardly believe it.

*Letter, Nov. 19, 1764.*

## OLIVER GOLDSMITH

### 52. THE VANITY OF FAME

A CHINESE, who long had studied the works of Confucius, who knew the characters of fourteen thousand words, and could read a great part of every book that came in his way, once took it into his head to travel into Europe, and observe the customs of a people whom he thought not very much inferior even to his own countrymen, in the art of refining upon every pleasure. Upon his arrival at Amsterdam, his passion for letters naturally led him to a bookseller's shop, and, as he could speak a little Dutch, he civilly asked the bookseller for the works of the immortal Xixosou. The bookseller assured him he had never heard of the book mentioned before. "What! have you never heard of that immortal poet?" returned the other, much surprised; "that light of the eyes, that favourite of kings, that rose of perfection! I suppose you know nothing of the immortal Fipsihihi, second cousin to the moon?" "Nothing at all, indeed, sir," returned the other. "Alas!" cries our traveller, "to what purpose, then, has one of these fasted to death, and the other offered himself up as a sacrifice to the Tartar enemy, to gain a renown which has never travelled beyond the precincts of China?"

There is scarce a village in Europe, and not one university, that is not thus furnished with its little great men. The head of a petty corporation who opposes the designs of a prince who would tyrannically force his subjects to save their best clothes for Sunday; the puny pedant who finds one

undiscovered property in the polype, or describes an unheeded process in the skeleton of a mole, and whose mind, like his microscope, perceives nature only in detail; the rhymer who makes smooth verses, and paints to our admiration when he should only speak to our hearts—all equally fancy themselves walking forward to immortality, and desire the crowd behind them to look on. The crowd takes them at their word. “Patriot,” “philosopher,” and “poet” are shouted in their train. “Where was there ever so much merit seen? No times so important as our own. Ages yet unborn shall gaze with wonder and applause!” To such music the important pigmy moves forward, bustling and swelling, and aptly compared to a puddle in a storm.

*The Bee*, No. vi.

### 53. EPITAPHS

WHEN the person is buried, the next care is to make his epitaph: they are generally reckoned best which flatter most; such relations, therefore, as have received most benefits from the defunct, discharge this friendly office, and generally flatter in proportion to their joy. When we read those monumental histories of the dead, it may be justly said that “all men are equal in the dust”; for they all appear equally remarkable for being the most sincere Christians, the most benevolent neighbours, and the honestest men of their time. To go through a European cemetery, one would be apt to wonder how mankind could have so basely degenerated from such excellent ancestors. Every tomb pretends to claim your reverence and regret; some are praised for piety in those inscriptions, who never entered the temple until they were dead; some are praised for being excellent poets, who were never mentioned, except for their dulness, when living; others for sublime orators, who were never noted except for their impudence; and others still, for military achievements, who were never in any other skirmishes but with the watch.

Some even make epitaphs for themselves, like slaves haughty, yet it  
reader's good-will. It were indeed to importance of a great  
man would early learn in this manner ial rights, and all the  
that he would draw it up in terms as flat<sup>o</sup> of us who would  
and that he would make it the employment of government purely  
to deserve it. amongst us who

*Citizen of the World,* L<sup>ts</sup>, to make  
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## EDMUND BURKE

## 54. CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT

I do not know that the Colonies have, in any general way, or in any cool hour, gone much beyond the demand of humanity in relation to taxes. It is not fair to judge of the temper or dispositions of any man, or any set of men, when they are composed and at rest, from their conduct, or their expressions, in a state of disturbance and irritation. It is besides a very great mistake to imagine, that mankind follow up practically any speculative principle, either of government or of freedom, as far as it will go in argument and logical illation. We Englishmen stop very short of the principles upon which we support any given part of our Constitution; or even the whole of it together. I could easily, if I had not already tired you, give you very striking and convincing instances of it. This is nothing but what is natural and proper. All government, indeed every human benefit and enjoyment, every virtue, and every prudent act, is founded on compromise and barter.

We balance inconveniences; we give and take; we remit some rights, that we may enjoy others; and we choose rather to be happy citizens, than subtle disputants. As we must give away some natural liberty, to enjoy civil advantages; so we must sacrifice some civil liberties, for the advantages to be derived from the communion and fellowship of a great empire. But, in all fair dealings, the thing bought must bear some proportion to the purchase paid. None will barter away *the immediate jewel of his soul*.

Though 'a great house is apt to make slaves haughty, yet it is purchasing a part of the artificial importance of a great empire too dear, to pay for it all essential rights, and all the intrinsic dignity of human nature. None of us who would not risk his life rather than fall under a government purely arbitrary. But although there are some amongst us who think our Constitution wants many improvements, to make it a complete system of liberty; perhaps none who are of that opinion would think it right to aim at such improvement, by disturbing his country, and risking everything that is dear to him. In every arduous enterprize, we consider what we are to lose, as well as what we are to gain; and the more and better stake of liberty every people possess, the less they will hazard in a vain attempt to make it more. These are *the cords of man*. Man acts from adequate motives relative to his interest, and not on metaphysical speculations. Aristotle, the great master of reasoning, cautions us, and with great weight and propriety, against this species of delusive geometrical accuracy in moral arguments, as the most fallacious of all sophistry.

The Americans will have no interest contrary to the grandeur and glory of England when they are not oppressed by the weight of it; and they will rather be inclined to respect the acts of a superintending legislature, when they see them the acts of that power, which is itself the security, not the rival, of their secondary importance. In this assurance my mind most perfectly acquiesces: and I confess I feel not the least alarm from the discontents which are to arise from putting people at their ease; nor do I apprehend the destruction of this Empire, from giving, by an act of free grace and indulgence, to two millions of my fellow-citizens some share of those rights, upon which I have always been taught to value myself.

*Speech on Conciliation with America, 1775.*

## 55. THE BOND OF EMPIRE

FOR that service, for all service, whether of revenue, trade, or empire, my trust is in her interest in the British Constitution. My hold of the Colonies is in the close affection which grows from common names, from kindred blood, from similar privileges, and equal protection. These are ties, which, though light as air, are as strong as links of iron. Let the Colonists always keep the idea of their civil rights associated with your Government;—they will cling and grapple to you; and no force under heaven will be of power to tear them from their allegiance. But let it be once understood, that your government may be one thing, and their Privileges another; that these two things may exist without any mutual relation;—the cement is gone, the cohesion is loosened; and everything hastens to decay and dissolution. As long as you have the wisdom to keep the sovereign authority of this country as the sanctuary of liberty, the sacred temple consecrated to one common faith, wherever the chosen race and sons of England worship freedom, they will turn their faces towards you. The more they multiply, the more friends you will have, the more ardently they love liberty, the more perfect will be their obedience. Slavery they can have anywhere. It is a weed that grows in every soil. They may have it from Spain, they may have it from Prussia. But until you become lost to all feeling of your true interest and your natural dignity, freedom they can have from none but you. This is the commodity of price, of which you have the monopoly. This is the true Act of Navigation, which binds to you the commerce of the Colonies, and through them secures to you the wealth of the world. Deny them this participation of freedom, and you break that sole bond, which originally made, and must still preserve, the unity of the Empire. Do not entertain so weak an imagination, as that your registers and your bonds, your affidavits and your sufferances, your cockets and your clearances, are what form the great securities of your commerce. Do not

dream that your letters of office, and your instructions, and your suspending clauses, are the things that hold together the great contexture of the mysterious whole. These things do not make your government. Dead instruments, passive tools as they are, it is the spirit of the English communion that gives all their life and efficacy to them. It is the spirit of the English Constitution, which, infused through the mighty mass, pervades, feeds, unites, invigorates, vivifies every part of the empire, even down to the minutest member.

Is it not the same virtue which does everything for us here in England? Do you imagine, then, that it is the Land Tax Act which raises your revenue? that it is the annual vote in the Committee of Supply which gives you your army? or that it is the Mutiny Bill which inspires it with bravery and discipline? No! Surely no! It is the love of the people; it is their attachment to their government, from the sense of the deep stake they have in such a glorious institution—which gives you your army and your navy, and infuses into both that liberal obedience, without which your army would be a base rabble, and your navy nothing but rotten timber.

All this, I know well enough, will sound wild and chimerical to the profane herd of those vulgar and mechanical politicians, who have no place among us; a sort of people who think that nothing exists but what is gross and material; and who therefore, far from being qualified to be directors of the great movement of empire, are not fit to turn a wheel in the machine. But to men truly initiated and rightly taught, these ruling and master principles, which, in the opinion of such men as I have mentioned, have no substantial existence, are in truth everything, and all in all. Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom; and a great empire and little minds go ill together. If we are conscious of our station, and glow with zeal to fill our places as becomes our situation and ourselves, we ought to auspicate all our public proceedings on America with the old warning of the Church, *Sursum corda*! <sup>1</sup> We ought to

<sup>1</sup> "Lift up your hearts!"

elevate our minds to the greatness of that trust to which the order of Providence has called us. By adverting to the dignity of this high calling, our ancestors have turned a savage wilderness into a glorious empire; and have made the most extensive, and the only honourable conquests, not by destroying, but by promoting the wealth, the number, the happiness, of the human race. Let us get an American revenue as we have got an American empire. English privileges have made it all that it is; English privileges alone will make it all it can be.

*It:z.*

## 56. THE DEFECTS OF OFFICIAL TRAINING

SIR, if such a man<sup>1</sup> fell into errors, it must be from defects not intrinsic; they must be rather sought in the particular habits of his life; which, though they do not alter the groundwork of character, yet tinge it with their own hue. He was bred in a profession. He was bred to the law, which is, in my opinion, one of the first and noblest of human sciences: a science which does more to quicken and invigorate the understanding, than all the other kinds of learning put together; but it is not apt, except in persons very happily born, to open and to liberalize the mind exactly in the same proportion. Passing from that study he did not go very largely into the world; but plunged into business; I mean into the business of office: and the limited and fixed methods and forms established there. Much knowledge is to be had undoubtedly in that line; and there is no knowledge which is not valuable. But it may be truly said, that men too much conversant in office are rarely minds of remarkable enlargement. Their habits of office are apt to give them a turn to think the substance of business not to be much more important than the forms in which it is conducted. These forms are adapted to ordinary occasions; and therefore persons who are nurtured in office do admir-

<sup>1</sup>George Grenville.

ably well, as long as things go on in their common order ; but when the high roads are broken up, and the waters out, when a new and troubled scene is opened, and the file affords no precedent, then it is that a greater knowledge of mankind, and a far more extensive comprehension of things, is requisite than ever office gave, or than office can ever give.

*Speech on American Taxation, 1774.*

## 57. THE BRITISH THRONE

SIR, your throne cannot stand secure upon the principles of unconditional submission and passive obedience ; on powers exercised without the concurrence of the people to be governed ; on acts made in defiance of their prejudices and habits ; on acquiescence procured by foreign mercenary troops, and secured by standing armies. These may possibly be the foundation of other thrones ; they must be the subversion of yours. It was not to passive principles in our ancestors that we owe the honour of appearing before a sovereign, who cannot feel that he is a prince, without knowing that we ought to be free. The revolution is a departure from the ancient course of the descent of this monarchy. The people, at that time, reentered into their original rights ; and it was not because a positive law authorized what was then done, but because the freedom and safety of the subject, the origin and cause of all laws, required a proceeding paramount and superior to them. At that ever memorable and instructive period, the letter of the law was superseded in favour of the substance of liberty. To the free choice, therefore, of the people, without either king or parliament, we owe that happy establishment, out of which both king and parliament were regenerated. From that great principle of liberty have originated the statutes, conforming and ratifying the establishment from which your majesty derives your right to rule over us. Those statutes have not given us our liberties ; our liberties have produced them. Every hour of

your majesty's reign your title stands upon the very same foundation on which it was at first laid; and we do not know a better on which it can possibly be placed.

*Address to the King, 1777.*

## 58. THE DEVASTATION OF THE CARNATIC

WHEN at length Hyder Ali found that he had to do with men who either would sign no convention, or whom no treaty and no signature could bind, and who were the determined enemies of human intercourse itself, he decreed to make the country possessed by these incorrigible and predestinated criminals a memorable example to mankind. He resolved, in the gloomy recesses of a mind capacious of such things, to leave the whole Carnatic an everlasting monument of vengeance, and to put perpetual desolation as a barrier between him and those against whom the faith which holds the moral elements of the world together was no protection. He became at length so confident of his force, so collected in his might, that he made no secret whatsoever of his dreadful resolution. Having terminated his disputes with every enemy, and every rival, who buried their mutual animosities in their common detestation against the creditors of the nabob of Arcot, he drew from every quarter whatever a savage ferocity could add to his new rudiments in the arts of destruction; and compounding all the materials of fury, havoc, and desolation, into one black cloud, he hung for a while on the declivities of the mountains. Whilst the authors of all these evils were idly and stupidly gazing on this menacing meteor, which blackened all their horizon, it suddenly burst, and poured down the whole of its contents upon the plains of the Carnatic. Then ensued a scene of woe, the like of which no eye had seen, no heart conceived, and which no tongue can adequately tell. All the horrors of war before known or heard of, were mercy to that new havoc. A storm of universal fire blasted every field, consumed every

house, destroyed every temple. The miserable inhabitants flying from their flaming villages, in part were slaughtered ; others, without regard to sex, to age, to the respect of rank, or sacredness of function, fathers torn from children, husbands from wives, enveloped in a whirlwind of cavalry, and amidst the goading spears of drivers, and the tramping of pursuing horses, were swept into captivity, in an unknown and hostile land. Those who were able to evade this tempest, fled to the walled cities. But escaping from fire, sword and exile, they fell into the jaws of famine.

The alms of the settlement, in this dreadful exigency, were certainly liberal ; and all was done by charity that private charity could do ; but it was a people in beggary—it was a nation which stretched out its hands for food. For months together these creatures of sufferance, whose very excess and luxury in their most plenteous days had fallen short of the allowance of our austerest fasts, silent, patient, resigned, without sedition or disturbance, almost without complaint, perished by an hundred a day in the streets of Madras ; every day seventy at least laid their bodies in the streets, or on the glacis of Tanjore, and expired of famine in the granary of India. I was going to awake your justice towards this unhappy part of our fellow citizens, by bringing before you some of the circumstances of this plague of hunger. Of all the calamities which beset and way-lay the life of man, this comes the nearest to our heart, and is that wherein the proudest of us all feels himself to be nothing more than he is : but I find myself unable to manage it with decorum ; these details are of a species of horror so nauseous and disgusting, they are so degrading to the sufferers and to the hearers, they are so humiliating to human nature itself, that, on better thoughts, I find it more advisable to throw a pall over this hideous object, and to leave it to your general conceptions.

For eighteen months, without intermission, this destruction raged from the gates of Madras to the gates of Tanjore ; and so completely did these masters in their art, Hyder Ali, and his more ferocious son, absolve themselves of their impious vow, that when the British armies traversed, as they

did, the Carnatic for hundred of miles in all directions, through the whole line of their march they did not see one man, not one woman, not one child, not one four-footed beast of any description whatever. One dead uniform silence reigned over the whole region. With the inconsiderable exceptions of the narrow vicinage of some few forts, I wish to be understood as speaking literally. I mean to produce to you more than three witnesses, above all exception, who will support this assertion in its full extent. That hurricane of war passed through every part of the central provinces of the Carnatic. Six or seven districts to the north and to the south (and these not wholly untouched) escaped the general ravage.

The Carnatic is a county not much inferior in extent to England. Figure to yourself, Mr. Speaker, the land in whose representative chair you sit; figure to yourself the form and fashion of your sweet and cheerful country, from Thames to Trent, north and south, and from the Irish to the German Sea, east and west, emptied and embowelled (may God avert the omen of our crimes!) by so accomplished a desolation. Extend your imagination a little farther, and then suppose your ministers taking a survey of this scene of waste and desolation; what would be your thoughts if you should be informed, that they were computing how much had been the amount of excises, how much the customs, how much the land and malt tax, in order that they should charge (take it in the most favourable light) for public service, upon the relics of the satiated vengeance of relentless enemies, the whole of what England had yielded in the most exuberant seasons of peace and abundance? What would you call it? To call it tyranny, sublimed into madness, would be too faint an image; yet this very madness is the principle upon which the ministers at your right hand have proceeded in their estimate of the revenues of the Carnatic, when they were providing, not supply for the establishments of its protection, but rewards for the authors of its ruin.

*Speech on the Nabob of Arcot's Debts, Feb. 28, 1785.*

## 59. THE DECAY OF CHIVALRY

It is now sixteen or seventeen years since I saw the queen of France,<sup>1</sup> then the dauphiness, at Versailles; and surely never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision. I saw her just above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to move in,—glittering like the morning star, full of life, and splendour, and joy. Oh! what a revolution! and what an heart must I have to contemplate without emotion that elevation and that fall! Little did I dream when she added titles of veneration to those of enthusiastic, distant, respectful love, that she should ever be obliged to carry the sharp antidote against disgrace concealed in that bosom; little did I dream that I should have lived to see such disasters fallen upon her in a nation of gallant men,—in a nation of men of honour and of cavaliers. I thought ten thousand swords must have leaped from their scabbards to avenge even a look that threatened her with insult.

But the age of chivalry is gone. That of sophisters, economists, and calculators, has succeeded; and the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever. Never, never more shall we behold that generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart, which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom. The unbought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise is gone! It is gone, that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honour, which felt a stain like a wound, which inspired courage whilst it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itself lost half its evil, by losing all its grossness.

This mixed system of opinion and sentiment had its origin in the ancient chivalry; and the principle, though varied in its appearance by the varying state of human affairs, subsisted and influenced through a long succession of generations,

<sup>1</sup> Marie Antoinette.

even to the time we live in. If it should ever be totally extinguished, the loss I fear will be great. It is this which has given its character to modern Europe. It is this which has distinguished it under all its forms of government, and distinguished it to its advantage from the states of Asia, and possibly from those states which flourished in the most brilliant periods of the antique world. It was this which, without confounding ranks, had produced a noble equality, and handed it down through all the gradations of social life. It was this opinion which mitigated kings into companions, and raised private men to be fellows with kings. Without force, or opposition, it subdued the fierceness of pride and power; it obliged sovereigns to submit to the soft collar of social esteem, compelled stern authority to submit to elegance, and gave a domination vanquisher of laws, to be subdued by manners.

But now all is to be changed. All the pleasing illusions, which made power gentle, and obedience liberal, which harmonized the different shades of life, and which by a bland assimilation incorporated into politics the sentiments which beautify and soften private society, are to be dissolved by this new conquering empire of light and reason. All the decent drapery of life is to be rudely torn off. All the superadded ideas, furnished from the wardrobe of a moral imagination, which the heart owns, and the understanding ratifies, as necessary to cover the defects of our naked shivering nature, and to raise it to dignity in our own estimation, are to be exploded as a ridiculous, absurd, and antiquated fashion.

On this scheme of things, a king is but a man, a queen is but a woman; a woman is but an animal, and an animal not of the highest order. All homage paid to the sex in general as such, and without distinct views, is to be regarded as romance and folly. Regicide, and parricide, and sacrilege, are but fictions of superstition, corrupting jurisprudence by destroying its simplicity. The murder of a king, or a queen, or a bishop, or a father, is only common homicide: and if the people are by any chance, or in any way, gainers by it, a

sort of homicide much the most pardonable, and into which we ought not to make too severe a scrutiny.

On the scheme of this barbarous philosophy, which is the offspring of cold hearts and muddy understandings, and which is as void of solid wisdom as it is destitute of all taste and elegance, laws are to be supported only by their own terrors, and by the concern which each individual may find in them from his own private speculations, or can spare to them from his own private interests. In the groves of *their* academy, at the end of every vista, you see nothing but the gallows. Nothing is left which engages the affections on the part of the commonwealth. On the principles of this mechanic philosophy, our institutions can never be embodied, if I may use the expression, in persons, so as to create in us love, veneration, admiration, or attachment. But that sort of reason which banishes the affections is incapable of filling their place. These public affections, combined with manners, are required sometimes as supplements, sometimes as correctives, always as aids to law. The precept given by a wise man, as well as a great critic, for the construction of poems, is equally true as to states:—*Non satis est pulchra esse poemata, dulcia sunt.*<sup>1</sup> There ought to be a system of manners in every nation which a well-formed mind would be disposed to relish. To make us love our country, our country ought to be lovely.

But power of some kind or other will survive the shock in which manners and opinions perish; and it will find other and worse means for its support. The usurpation which, in order to subvert ancient institutions, has destroyed ancient principles, will hold power by acts similar to those by which it has acquired it. When the old feudal and chivalrous spirit of *fealty*, which, by freeing kings from fear, freed both kings and subjects from the precautions of tyranny, shall be extinct in the minds of men, plots and assassinations will be anticipated by preventive murder and preventive confiscation, and that long roll of grim and bloody maxims, which form the

<sup>1</sup> "It is not enough for poems to be beautiful, they must be pleasing."  
Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 99.

political code of all power, not standing on its own honour, and the honour of those who are to obey it. Kings will be tyrants from policy when subjects are rebels from principle.

When ancient opinions and rules of life are taken away, the loss cannot possibly be estimated. From that moment we have no compass to govern us; nor can we know distinctly to what port we steer. Europe undoubtedly, taken in a mass, was in a flourishing condition the day on which your Revolution was completed. How much of that prosperous state was owing to the spirit of our old manners and opinions is not easy to say; but as such causes cannot be indifferent in their operation, we must presume that, on the whole, their operation was beneficial.

We are but too apt to consider things in the state in which we find them, without sufficiently adverting to the causes by which they have been produced, and possibly may be upheld. Nothing is more certain than that our manners, our civilization, and all the good things which are connected with manners and with civilization, have, in this European world of ours, depended for ages upon two principles; and were indeed the result of both combined; I mean the spirit of a gentleman, and the spirit of religion. The nobility and the clergy, the one by profession, the other by patronage, kept learning in existence, even in the midst of arms and confusions, and whilst governments were rather in their causes than formed. Learning paid back what it received to nobility and to priesthood; and paid it with usury, by enlarging their ideas, and by furnishing their minds. Happy if they had all continued to know their indissoluble union, and their proper place! Happy if learning, not debauched by ambition, had been satisfied to continue the instructor, and not aspired to be the master! Along with its natural protectors and guardians, learning will be cast into the mire, and trodden down under the hoofs of a swinish multitude.

If, as I suspect, modern letters owe more than they are always willing to own to ancient manners, so do other interests which we value full as much as they are worth. Even commerce, and trade, and manufacture, the gods of our

cal politicians, are themselves perhaps but creatures, themselves but effects, which, as first causes, we choose are them. They certainly grew under the same shade in to worshipping flourished. They, too, may decay with their which least protecting principles. With you, for the present at natural by all threaten to disappear together. Where trade least, the manufactures are wanting to a people, and the spirit of and manly religion remains, sentiment supplies, and not nobility a supplies, their place ; but if commerce and the always illd be lost in an experiment to try how well a state arts should without these old fundamental principles, what sort may stand must be a nation of gross, stupid, ferocious, and, at of a thing time, poor and sordid barbarians, destitute of the same honour, or manly pride, possessing nothing at religion, and hoping for nothing hereafter?

present, and

*Reflections on the Revolution in France.*

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## 61. THE EVENING OF LIFE

THE present is a fleeting moment, the past is no more ; and our prospect of futurity is dark and doubtful. This day may *possibly* be my last : but the laws of probability, so true in general, so fallacious in particular, still allow about fifteen years. I shall soon enter into the period which, as the most agreeable of his long life, was selected by the judgment and experience of the sage Fontenelle. His choice is approved by the eloquent historian of nature,<sup>1</sup> who fixes our moral happiness to the mature season, in which our passions are supposed to be calmed, our duties fulfilled, our ambition satisfied, our fame and fortune established on a solid basis. In private conversation that great and amiable man added the weight of his own experience ; and this autumnal felicity might be exemplified in the lives of Voltaire, Hume and many other men of letters. I am far more inclined to embrace than to dispute this comfortable doctrine ; but I must reluctantly observe that two causes, the abbreviation of time and the failure of hope, will always tinge with a browner shade the evening of life.

*Memoirs.*

## 62. THE POWER OF THE ROMAN EMPERORS

A MODERN tyrant, who should find no resistance either in his own breast or in his people, would soon experience a gentle restraint from the example of his equals, the dread of present censure, the advice of his allies, and the apprehension of his enemies. The object of his displeasure, escaping from the narrow limits of his dominions, would easily obtain, in a happier climate, a secure refuge, a new fortune adequate to his merit, the freedom of complaint, and perhaps the means of revenge. But the empire of the Romans filled the world, and, when that empire fell into the hands of a single

<sup>1</sup> Buffon.

person, the world became a safe and dreary prison for his enemies. The slave of Imperial despotism, whether he was condemned to drag his gilded chain in Rome and the senate, or to wear out a life of exile on the barren rock of Seriphus, or the frozen banks of the Danube, expected his fate in silent despair. To resist was fatal, and it was impossible to fly. On every side he was encompassed with a vast extent of sea and land, which he could never hope to traverse without being discovered, seized, and restored to his irritated master. Beyond the frontiers his anxious view could discover nothing, except the ocean, inhospitable deserts, hostile tribes of barbarians, of fierce manners and unknown language, or dependent kings, who would gladly purchase the emperor's protection by the sacrifice of an obnoxious fugitive. "Wherever you are," said Cicero to the exiled Marcellus, "remember that you are equally within the power of the conqueror."

*History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ch. 3.

### 63 JULIAN MADE EMPEROR BY HIS SOLDIERS

AT the hour of midnight, the impetuous multitude, with swords and bows and torches in their hands, rushed into the suburbs; encompassed the palace; and, careless of future dangers, pronounced the fatal and irrevocable words, JULIAN AUGUSTUS! The prince, whose anxious suspense was interrupted by their disorderly acclamations, secured the doors against their intrusion; and, as long as it was in his power, secluded his person and dignity from the accidents of a nocturnal tumult. At the dawn of day, the soldiers, whose zeal was irritated by opposition, forcibly entered the palace, seized, with respectful violence, the object of their choice, guarded Julian with drawn swords through the streets of Paris, placed him on the tribunal, and with repeated shouts saluted him as their emperor. Prudence as well as loyalty inculcated the propriety of resisting their treasonable designs

and of preparing for his oppressed virtue the excuse of violence. Addressing himself by turns to the multitude and to individuals, he sometimes implored their mercy, and sometimes expressed his indignation; conjured them not to sully the fame of their immortal victories; and ventured to promise that, if they would immediately return to their allegiance, he would undertake to obtain from the emperor not only a free and gracious pardon, but even the revocation of the orders which had excited their resentment. But the soldiers, who were conscious of their guilt, chose rather to depend on the gratitude of Julian than on the clemency of the emperor. Their zeal was insensibly turned into impatience, and their impatience into rage. The inflexible Caesar sustained, till the third hour of the day, their prayers, their reproaches, and their menaces; nor did he yield, till he had been repeatedly assured that, if he wished to live, he must consent to reign. He was exalted on a shield in the presence, and amidst the unanimous acclamations, of the troops; a rich military collar, which was offered by chance, supplied the want of a diadem; the ceremony was concluded by the promise of a moderate donative; and the new emperor, overwhelmed with real or affected grief, retired into the most secret recesses of his apartment.

*Ibid.* ch. 22.

#### 64 ALARIC AT THE GATES OF ROME

THE last resource of the Romans was in the clemency, or at least in the moderation, of the king of the Goths. The senate, who in this emergency assumed the supreme powers of government, appointed two ambassadors to negotiate with the enemy. This important trust was delegated to Basilius, a senator, of Spanish extraction, and already conspicuous in the administration of provinces: and to John, the first tribune of the notaries, who was peculiarly qualified by his dexterity in business as well as by his former intimacy with the Gothic prince. When they were introduced into his

presence, they declared, perhaps in a more lofty style than became their abject condition, that the Romans were resolved to maintain their dignity, either in peace or war ; and that, if Alaric refused them a fair and honourable capitulation, he might sound his trumpets, and prepare to give battle to an innumerable people, exercised in arms and animated by despair. "The thicker the hay, the easier it is mowed," was the concise reply of the Barbarian ; and this rustic metaphor was accompanied by a loud and insulting laugh, expressive of his contempt for the menaces of an unwarlike populace, enervated by luxury before they were emaciated by famine. He then condescended to fix the ransom, which he would accept as the price of his retreat from the walls of Rome : *all* the gold and silver in the city, whether it were the property of the state or of individuals ; *all* the rich and precious moveables ; and *all* the slaves who could prove their title to the name of *Barbarians*. The ministers of the senate presumed to ask, in a modest and suppliant tone, "If such, O king ! are your demands, what do you intend to leave us ?" "YOUR LIVES," replied the haughty conqueror : they trembled and retired. Yet, before they retired, a short suspension of arms was granted, which allowed some time for a more temperate negotiation. The stern features of Alaric were insensibly relaxed ; he abated much of the rigour of his terms ; and at length consented to raise the siege, on the immediate payment of five thousand pounds of gold, of thirty thousand pounds of silver, of four thousand robes of silk, of three thousand pieces of fine scarlet cloth, and of three thousand pounds weight of pepper. But the public treasury was exhausted ; the annual rents of the great estates in Italy and the provinces were intercepted by the calamities of war ; the gold and gems had been exchanged during the famine for the vilest sustenance ; the hoards of secret wealth were still concealed by the obstinacy of avarice ; and some remains of consecrated spoils afforded the only resource that could avert the impending ruin of the city.

## WILLIAM PITT THE YOUNGER

### 65. PLEA FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE

WE, Sir, have long since emerged from barbarism—we have almost forgotten that we were once barbarians—we are now raised to a situation which exhibits a striking contrast to every circumstance by which a Roman might have characterized us, and by which we now characterize Africa. There is indeed one thing wanting to complete the contrast, and to clear us altogether from the imputation of acting even to this hour as barbarians; for we continue to this hour a barbarous traffic in slaves; we continue it even yet in spite of all our great and undeniable pretensions to civilization. We were once as obscure among the nations of the earth, as savage in our manners, as debased in our morals, as degraded in our understandings, as these unhappy Africans are at present. But in the lapse of a long series of years, by a progression slow, and for a time almost imperceptible, we have become rich in a variety of acquirements, favoured above measure in the gifts of Providence, unrivalled in commerce, pre-eminent in arts, foremost in the pursuits of philosophy and science, and established in all the blessings of civil society: We are in the possession of peace, of happiness, and of liberty; we are under the guidance of a mild and beneficent religion; and we are protected by impartial laws, and the purest administration of justice: We are living under a system of government, which our own happy experience leads us to pronounce the best

and wisest which has ever yet been framed ; a system which has become the admiration of the world. From all these blessings we must for ever have been shut out, had there been any truth in those principles which some gentlemen have not hesitated to lay down as applicable to the case of Africa. Had those principles been true, we ourselves had languished to this hour in that miserable state of ignorance, brutality and degradation, in which history proves our ancestors to have been immersed. Had other nations adopted these principles in their conduct towards us, had other nations applied to Great Britain the reasoning which some of the senators of this very island now apply to Africa ; ages might have passed without our emerging from barbarism ; and we, who are enjoying the blessings of British civilization, of British laws, and British liberty, might at this hour have been little superior, either in morals, in knowledge, or refinement, to the rude inhabitants of the coast of Guinea. . . .

I trust we shall no longer continue this commerce, to the destruction of every improvement on that wide continent ; and shall not consider ourselves as conferring too great a boon, in restoring its inhabitants to the rank of human beings. I trust we shall not think ourselves too liberal, if, by abolishing the slave-trade, we give them the same common chance of civilization with other parts of the world, and that we shall now allow to Africa the opportunity—the hope—the prospect of attaining to the same blessings which we ourselves, through the favourable dispensations of Divine Providence, have been permitted, at a much more early period, to enjoy. If we listen to the voice of reason and duty, and pursue this night the line of conduct which they prescribe, some of us may live to see a reverse of that picture, from which we now turn our eyes with shame and regret. We may live to behold the natives of Africa engaged in the calm occupations of industry, in the pursuits of a just and legitimate commerce. We may behold the beams of science and philosophy breaking in upon their land, which at some happy period in still later

times, may blaze with full lustre ; and joining their influence to that of pure religion, may illuminate and invigorate the most distant extremities of that immense continent. Then may we hope that even Africa, though last of all the quarters of the globe, shall enjoy at length, in the evening of her days, those blessings which have descended so plentifully upon us in a much earlier period of the world. Then also will Europe, participating in her improvement and prosperity, receive an ample recompense for the tardy kindness (if kindness it can be called), of no longer hindering that continent from extricating herself out of the darkness which, in other more fortunate regions, has been so much more speedily dispelled.

—Nos primus equis oriens afflavit anhelis ;  
Illic sera rubens accendit lumina Vesper.<sup>1</sup>

*Speech in House of Commons, April 2, 1792.*

<sup>1</sup> Virgil, *Georgic* i. 250.—“ Early dawn has touched *us* with the breath of his panting steeds : *there* the blushing star of eve kindles his late lamp.”

## PART IV.—NINETEENTH CENTURY

### GEORGE CANNING

#### 66. THE BALANCE OF THE CONSTITUTION

BUT, gentlemen, I am for the whole constitution. The liberty of the subject as much depends on the maintenance of the constitutional prerogatives of the crown, on the acknowledgment of the legitimate power of the other House of Parliament, as it does in upholding that supreme power (for such it is in one sense of the word, though not in that of the Revolution of 1648), the power of the purse, which resides in the democratical branch of the constitution. Whatever beyond its just proportion was gained by one part, would be gained at the expense of the whole; and the balance is now, perhaps, as nearly poised as human wisdom can adjust it. I fear to touch that balance, the disturbance of which must bring confusion on the nation.

Gentlemen, I trust there are few, very few, reasonable and enlightened men ready to lend themselves to projects of confusion. But I confess I very much wish, that all who are not ready to do so would consider the ill effect of any countenance given, publicly or by apparent implication, to those whom, in their heart and judgments, they despise. I remember that most excellent and able man, Mr. Wilberforce, once saying in the House of Commons, that he "never believed an opposition really to wish mischief to the country; that they only wished just so much mischief as

might drive their opponents out, and place themselves in their room." Now, gentlemen, I cannot help thinking, that there are some persons tampering with the question of reform something in the same spirit. They do not go so far as the reformers ; they even state irreconcilable differences ; but to a certain extent they agree and even co-operate with them. They co-operate with them in inflaming the public feeling not only against the government, but against the support given by parliament to that government, in the hope, no doubt, of attracting to themselves the popularity which is lost to their opponents, and thus being enabled to correct and retrieve the errors of a displaced administration. Vain and hopeless task, to raise such a spirit and then to govern it ! They may stimulate the steeds into fury, till the chariot is hurried to the brink of a precipice ; but do they flatter themselves that they can then leap in, and, hurling the incompetent driver from his seat, check the reins just in time to turn from the precipice and avoid the fall ? I fear they would attempt it in vain. The impulse once given, may be too impetuous to be controlled, and intending only to change the guidance of the machine, they may hurry it and themselves to irretrievable destruction.

*Speech at Liverpool, 1820.*

## SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

### 67. INFLUENCE OF CONTEMPORARY WRITINGS

FROM causes which this is not the place to investigate, no models of past times, however perfect, can have the same vivid effect on the youthful mind, as the productions of contemporary genius. The discipline my mind had undergone removed all obstacles to the appreciation of excellence in style without diminishing my delight. That I was thus prepared for the perusal of Mr. Bowles's sonnets and earlier poems, at once increased *their* influence and *my* enthusiasm. The great works of past ages seem to a young man things of another race, in respect to which his faculties must remain passive and submiss, even as to the stars and mountains. But the writings of a contemporary, perhaps not many years older than himself, surrounded by the same circumstances, and disciplined by the same manners, possess a reality for him, and inspire an actual friendship as of a man for a man. His very admiration is the wind which fans and feeds his hope. The poems themselves assume the properties of flesh and blood. To recite, to extol, to contend for them is but the payment of a debt due to one who exists to receive it.

*Biographia Literaria*, ch. i.

### 68. THE EDUCATED MAN

WHAT is that which first strikes us, and strikes us at once, in a man of education ; and which, among educated men, so

instantly distinguishes the man of superior mind, that (as was observed with eminent propriety of the late Edmund Burke) "we cannot stand under the same archway during a shower of rain without finding him out?" Not the weight or novelty of his remarks ; not any unusual interest of facts communicated by him ; for we may suppose both the one and the other precluded by the shortness of our intercourse, and the triviality of the subjects. The difference will be impressed and felt though the conversation should be confined to the state of the weather or the pavement. Still less will it arise from any peculiarity in his words and phrases ; for if he be, as we now assume, a *well*-educated man, as well as a man of superior powers, he will not fail to follow the golden rule of Julius Caesar, and, unless where new things necessitate new terms, he will avoid an unusual word as a rock. It must have been among the earliest lessons of his youth that the breach of this precept, at all times hazardous, becomes ridiculous in the topics of ordinary conversation. There remains but one other point of distinction possible ; and this must be, and in fact is, the true cause of the impression made on us. It is the unpremeditated and evidently habitual *arrangement* of his words, grounded on the habit of foreseeing, in each integral part, or (more plainly) in every sentence, the whole that he then intends to communicate. However irregular and desultory his talk, there is METHOD in the fragments.

*The Friend.*

## ROBERT SOUTHEY

### 69. REFLECTIONS ON THE DEATH OF NELSON

THE death of Nelson was felt in England as something more than a public calamity : men started at the intelligence and turned pale, as if they had heard of the loss of a dear friend. An object of our admiration and affection, of our pride and of our hopes, was suddenly taken from us ; and it seemed as if we had never, till then, known how deeply we loved and venerated him. What the country had lost in its great naval hero—the greatest of our own, and of all former times, was scarcely taken into the account of grief. So perfectly indeed had he performed his part that the maritime war, after the battle of Trafalgar, was considered at an end : the fleets of the enemy were not merely defeated, but destroyed ; new navies must be built, and a new race of seamen reared for them, before the possibility of their invading our shores could again be contemplated. It was not therefore from any selfish reflection upon the magnitude of our loss that we mourned for him : the general sorrow was of a higher character. The people of England grieved that funeral ceremonies and public monuments and posthumous rewards were all that they could now bestow upon him whom the king, the legislature and the nation would have alike delighted to honour ; whom every tongue would have blessed ; whose presence in every village through which he might have passed would have wakened the church bells, have given school-boys a holiday, have drawn children from their sports to gaze upon him, and “old men from the

chimney corner" to look upon Nelson ere they died. The victory of Trafalgar was celebrated indeed with the usual forms of rejoicing, but they were without joy; for such already was the glory of the British navy, through Nelson's surpassing genius, that it scarcely seemed to receive any addition from the most signal victory that ever was achieved upon the seas: and the destruction of this mighty fleet, by which all the maritime schemes of France were totally frustrated, hardly appeared to add to our security or strength; for while Nelson was living, to watch the combined squadrons of the enemy, we felt ourselves as secure as now, when they were no longer in existenc.

There was reason to suppose, from the appearances upon opening the body, that in the course of nature he might have attained, like his father, to a good old age. Yet he cannot be said to have fallen prematurely whose work was done; nor ought he to be lamented who died so full of honours and at the height of human fame. The most triumphant death is that of the martyr; the most awful that of the martyred patriot; the most splendid that of the hero in the hour of victory; and if the chariot and the horses of fire had been vouchsafed for Nelson's translation, he could scarcely have departed in a brighter blaze of glory. He has left us, not indeed his mantle of inspiration, but a name and an example which are at this hour inspiring thousands of the youth of England: a name which is our pride, and an example which will continue to be our shield and our strength. Thus it is that the spirits of the great and wise continue to live and to act after them; verifying in this sense the language of the old mythologist:

Τοὶ μὲν δαίμονες εἰσι, Διὸς μεγάλου διὰ βουλὰς  
Ἑσθλοὶ, ἐπιχθόνιοι, φύλακες θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων.<sup>1</sup>

*Life of Nelson.*

<sup>1</sup> "Verily they are become as gods, by the counsels of high Zeus they dwell still on earth in nobleness, guardians of mortal men."—*Hesiod.*

## CHARLES LAMB

### 70. DREAMS

My night fancies have long ceased to be afflictive. I confess an occasional nightmare ; but I do not, as in early youth, keep a stud of them. Fiendish faces, with the extinguished taper, will come and look at me ; but I know them for mockeries, even while I cannot elude their presence, and I fight and grapple with them. For the credit of my imagination, I am almost ashamed to say how tame and prosaic my dreams are grown. They are never romantic, seldom even rural. They are of architecture and of buildings—cities abroad, which I have never seen and hardly have hoped to see. I have traversed, for the seeming length of a natural day, Rome, Amsterdam, Paris, Lisbon—their churches, palaces, squares, market-places, shops, suburbs, ruins, with an inexpressible sense of delight—a map-like distinctness of trace, and a day-light vividness of vision, that was all but being awake. I have formerly travelled among the Westmoreland fells—my highest Alps,—but they are objects too mighty for the grasp of my dreaming recognition ; and I have again and again awoke with ineffectual struggles of the inner eye, to make out a shape, in any way whatever, of Helvellyn. Methought I was in that country, but the mountains were gone. The poverty of my dreams mortifies me. There is Coleridge, at his will can conjure up icy domes, and pleasure-houses for Kubla Khan, and Abyssinian maids, and songs of Abara, and caverns,

Where Alph, the sacred river, runs,

E.P.

H

to solace his night solitudes—when I cannot muster a fiddle. Barry Cornwall has his tritons and his nereids gamboling before him in nocturnal visions, and proclaiming sons born to Neptune—when my stretch of imaginative activity can hardly, in the night season, raise up the ghost of a fish-wife. To set my failures in somewhat a mortifying light—it was after reading the noble *Dream* of this poet, that my fancy ran strong upon these marine spectra; and the poor plastic power, such as it is, within me set to work to humour my folly in a sort of dream that very night. Methought I was upon the ocean billows at some sea nuptials, riding and mounted high, with the customary train sounding their conchs before me, (I myself, you may be sure, the *leading god*), and jollily we went careering over the main, till just where Ino Leucothea should have greeted me (I think it was Ino) with a white embrace, the billows gradually subsiding, fell from a sea roughness to a sea calm, and thence to a river motion, and that river (as happens in the familiarization of dreams) was no other than the gentle Thames, which landed me in the wafture of a placid wave or two, alone, safe and inglorious, somewhere at the foot of Lambeth palace.

*Essays of Elia.*

## 71. BLAKESMOOR IN H—SHIRE

JOURNEYING northwards lately, I could not resist going some few miles out of my road to look upon the remains of an old great house with which I had been impressed in this way in infancy. I was apprised that the owner of it had lately pulled it down; still I had a vague notion that it could not all have perished,—that so much solidity with magnificence could not have been crushed all at once into the mere dust and rubbish which I found it.

The work of ruin had proceeded with a swift hand indeed, and the demolition of a few weeks had reduced it to—an antiquity.

I was astonished at the indistinction of everything. Where had stood the great gates? What bounded the court-yard? Whereabout did the out-houses commence? A few bricks only lay as representatives of that which was so stately and so spacious.

Death does not shrink up his human victim at this rate. The burnt ashes of a man weigh more in their proportion. Had I seen these brick-and-mortar knaves at their process of destruction, at the plucking of every panel I should have felt the varlets at my heart, I should have cried out to them to spare a plank at least out of the cheerful storeroom, in whose hot window-seat I used to sit and read Cowley, with the grass-plot before, and the hum and flappings of that one solitary wasp that ever haunted it about me—it is in mine ears now, as oft as summer returns; or a panel of the yellow-room.

Why, every plank and panel of that house for me had magic in it. The tapestried bedrooms—tapestry so much better than painting—not adorning merely, but peopling the wainscots—at which childhood ever and anon would steal a look, shifting its coverlid (replaced as quickly) to exercise its tender courage in a momentary eye-encounter with those stern bright visages, staring reciprocally—all Ovid on the walls, in colours vividder than his descriptions. Actaeon in mid sprout, with the unappeasable prudery of Diana; and the still more provoking and almost culinary coolness of Dan Phoebe, eel-fashion, deliberately divesting of Marsyas.

Then, that haunted room—in which old Mrs. Battle died—whereinto I have crept, but always in the day time, with a passion of fear; and a sneaking curiosity, terror-tainted, to hold communication with the past.—*How shall they build it up again?*

It was an old deserted place, yet not so long deserted but that traces of the splendour of past inmates were everywhere apparent. Its furniture was still standing—even to the tarnished gilt leather battledores, and crumbling feathers of shuttlecocks in the nursery, which told that children had once played there. But I was a lonely child, and had the

range at will of every apartment, knew every nook and corner, wondered and worshipped everywhere.

The solitude of childhood is not so much the mother of thought as it is the feeder of love, of silence, and admiration. So strange a passion for the place possessed me in those years, that, though there lay—I shame to say how few roods distant from the mansion—half hid by trees, what I judged some romantic lake, such was the spell which bound me to the house, and such my carefulness not to pass its strict and proper precincts, that the idle waters lay unexplored for me; and not till late in life, curiosity prevailing over elder devotion, I found, to my astonishment, a pretty brawling brook had been the *Lacus Incognitus* of my infancy. Variegated views, extensive prospects—and those at no great distance from the house—I was told of such—what were they to me, being out of the boundaries of my Eden? So far from a wish to roam, I would have drawn, methought, still closer to the fences of my chosen prison, and have been hemmed in by a yet securer cincture of those excluding garden walls. I could have exclaimed with the garden-loving poet—

Bind me, ye woodbines, in your twines :  
Curl me about, ye gadding vines ;  
And oh so close your circles lace,  
That I may never leave this place ;  
But, lest your fetters prove too weak,  
Ere I your silken bondage break,  
Do you, O brambles, chain me too,  
And, courteous briars, nail me through.

I was here as in a lonely temple. Snug firesides—the low-built roof—parlours ten feet by ten—frugal boards, and all the homeliness of home—these were the conditions of my birth—the wholesome soil which I was planted in. Yet, without impeachment to their tenderest lessons, I am not sorry to have had glances of something beyond, and to have taken, if but a peep, in childhood, at the contrasting accidents of a great fortune.

*Essays of Elia.*

## 72. THE SANITY OF TRUE GENIUS

BUT the true poet dreams being awake. He is not possessed by his subject, but has dominion over it. In the groves of Eden he walks familiar as in his native paths. He ascends the empyrean heaven, and is not intoxicated. He treads the burning marl without dismay; he wins his flight without self-loss through realms "of chaos and old night." Or if, abandoning himself to that severer chaos of a "human mind untuned," he is content awhile to be mad with Lear, or to hate mankind (a sort of madness) with Timon, neither is that madness nor this misanthropy so unchecked, but that—never letting the reins of reason wholly go, while most he seems to do so—he has his better genius still whispering at his ear, with the good servant Kent suggesting saner counsels, or with the honest steward Flavius recommending kindlier resolutions. Where he seems most to recede from humanity, he will be found the truest to it. From beyond the scope of Nature if he summon possible existences, he subjugates them to the law of her consistency. He is beautifully loyal to that sovereign directress, even when he appears most to betray and desert her. His ideal tribes submit to policy; his very monsters are tamed to his hand, even as that wild sea-brood shepherded by Proteus. He tames and he clothes them with attributes of flesh and blood, till they wonder at themselves, like Indian Islanders forced to submit to European vesture. Caliban, the Witches, are as true to the laws of their own nature (ours with a difference), as Othello, Hamlet, and Macbeth.

*Essays of Elia.*

## 73. SHAKESPEARE'S LEAR

BUT the Lear of Shakespeare cannot be acted. The contemptible machinery by which they mimic the storm which he goes out in, is not more inadequate to represent the horrors of the real elements than any actor can be to represent Lear: they might more easily propose to personate

the Satan of Milton upon a stage, or one of Michael Angelo's terrible figures. The greatness of Lear is not in corporal dimension but in intellectual: the explosions of his passion are terrible as a volcano; they are storms turning up and disclosing to the bottom that sea, his mind, with all its vast riches. It is his mind which is laid bare. This case of flesh and blood seems too insignificant to be thought on; even as he himself neglects it. On the stage we see nothing but corporal infirmities and weakness, the impotence of rage. While we read it, we see not Lear, but we are Lear: we are in his mind, we are sustained by a grandeur which baffles the malice of daughters and storms. In the aberrations of his reason we discover a mighty irregular power of reasoning, immethodized from the ordinary purposes of life, but exerting its powers, as "the wind bloweth where it listeth," at will upon the corruptions and abuses of mankind. What have looks or tones to do with that sublime identification of his age with that of the *heavens themselves*, when, in his reproaches to them for conniving at the injustice of his children, he reminds them that "they themselves are old"? What gesture shall we appropriate to this? What has the voice or the eye to do with such things? But the play is beyond all art, as the tamperings with it show: it is too hard and stony; it must have love-scenes and a happy ending. It is not enough that Cordelia is a daughter; she must shine as a lover too. Tate has put his hook in the nostrils of this Leviathan, for Garrick and his followers, the show-men of the scene, to draw the mighty beast about more easily. A happy ending!—as if the living martyrdom that Lear had gone through,—the flaying of his feelings alive, did not make a fair dismissal from the stage of life the only decorous thing for him. If he is to live and be happy after, if he could sustain this world's burden after, why all this pudder and preparation,—why torment us with all this unnecessary sympathy? As if the childish pleasure of getting his gilt robes and sceptre again could tempt him to act over again his misused station!—as if, at his years and with his experience, anything was left but to die!

## WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

### 74. THE DREAM OF PETRARCA

*Petrarca.* When I was younger I was fond of wandering in solitary places, and never was afraid of slumbering in woods and grottoes. Among the chief pleasures of my life, and among the commonest of my occupations, was the bringing before me such heroes and heroines of antiquity, such poets and sages, such of the prosperous and unfortunate as most interested me by their courage, their wisdom, their eloquence, or their adventures. Engaging them in the conversations best suited to their characters, I knew perfectly their manners, their steps, their voices, and often did I moisten with my tears the models I had been forming of the less happy.... Allegory had few attractions for me, believing it to be the delight in general of idle, frivolous, inexcursive minds, in whose mansions there is neither hall nor portal to receive the loftier of the Passions. A stranger to the Affections, she holds a low station among the hand-maidens of Poetry, being fit for little but an apparition in a mask. I had reflected for some time on this subject, when, wearied with the length of my walk over the mountains, and finding a soft old mole hill, covered with grey grass, by the way-side, I laid my head upon it and slept. I can not tell how long it was before a species of dream or vision came over me.

Two beautiful youths appeared beside me; each was winged; but the wings were hanging down, and seemed ill adapted to flight. One of them, whose voice was the softest

I ever heard, looking at me frequently, said to the other, "He is under my guardianship for the present: do not awaken him with that feather." Methought, on hearing the whisper, I saw something like the feather on an arrow; and then the arrow itself, the whole of it, even to the point; although he carried it in such a manner that it was difficult at first to discover more than a palm's length of it; the rest of the shaft (and the whole of the barb) was behind his ankles.

"This feather never awakens anyone," replied he, rather petulantly; "but it brings more of confident security, and more of cherished dreams, than you, without me, are capable of imparting."

"Be it so!" answered the gentler; "none is less inclined to quarrel or dispute than I am. Many whom you have wounded grievously call upon me for succour; but so little am I disposed to thwart you, it is seldom I venture to do more for them than to whisper a few words of comfort in passing. How many reproaches on these occasions have been cast upon me for indifference and infidelity! Nearly as many, and nearly in the same terms, as upon you!"

"Odd enough that we, O Sleep! should be thought so alike!" said Love, contemptuously, "Yonder is he who bears a nearer resemblance to you: the dullest have observed it." I fancied I turned my eyes to where he was pointing, and saw at a distance the figure he designated. Meanwhile the contention went on uninterruptedly. Sleep was slow in asserting his power or his benefits. Love recapitulated them; but only that he might assert his own above them. Suddenly he called on me to decide, and to choose my patron. Under the influence, first of the one, then of the other, I sprang from repose to rapture, I alighted from rapture on repose, and knew not which was sweetest. Love was very angry with me, and declared he would cross me throughout the whole of my existence. Whatever I might on other occasions have thought of his veracity, I now felt too surely the conviction that he would keep his word. At last, before the close of the altercation, the third Genius had

advanced, and stood near us. I can not tell how I knew him, but I knew him to be the Genius of Death. Breathless as I was at beholding him, I soon became familiar with his features. First they seemed only calm; presently they grew contemplative; and lastly beautiful: those of the Graces themselves are less regular, less harmonious, less composed. Love glanced at him unsteadily, with a countenance in which there was somewhat of anxiety, somewhat of disdain; and cried, "Go away! go away! nothing that thou touchest lives!" "Say rather, child!" replied the advancing form, and advancing grew loftier and statelier, "say rather that nothing of beautiful or of glorious lives its own true life until my wing hath passed over it."

Love pouted, and rumbled and bent down with his forefinger the stiff short feathers on his arrow-head; but replied not. Although he frowned worse than ever, and at me, I dreaded him less and less and scarcely looked toward him. The milder and calmer Genius, the third, in proportion as I took courage to contemplate him, regarded me with more and more complacency. He held neither flower nor arrow as the others did; but throwing back the clusters of dark curls that overshadowed his countenance, he presented to me his hand, openly and benignly. I shrank on looking at him so near, and yet I sighed to love him. He smiled, not without an expression of pity, at perceiving my diffidence, my timidity; for I remembered how soft was the hand of Sleep, how warm and entrancing was Love's. By degrees I became ashamed of my ingratitude; and turning my face away, I held out my arms, and I felt my neck within his. Composure strewed and allayed all the throbbings of my bosom; the coolness of freshest morning breathed around, the heavens seemed to open above me; while the beautiful cheek of my deliverer rested on my head. I would now have looked for those others; but knowing my intention by my gesture, he said consolatorily,

"Sleep is on his way to the Earth, where many are calling him; but it is not to these he hastens; for every call only makes him fly farther off. Sedately and gravely as he looks,

he is nearly as capricious and volatile as the more arrogant and ferocious one."

"And Love!" said I, "whither is he departed? If not too late, I would propitiate and appease him."

"He who can not follow me, he who can not overtake and pass me," said the Genius, "is unworthy of the name, the most glorious in earth or heaven. Look up! Love is yonder, and ready to receive thee."

I looked: the earth was under me: I saw only the clear blue sky, and something brighter above it.

*The Pentameron.*

## 75. DIALOGUE BETWEEN MARCUS CICERO AND HIS BROTHER

*Quinctus.* I see the servants have lighted the lamps in the house earlier than usual, hoping, I suppose, we shall retire to rest in good time, that to-morrow they may prepare the festivities for your birthday.

*Marcus.* They are bringing out of the dining-room, I apprehend, the busts our Atticus lately sent me. Let us hasten to prevent it, or they may place Homer and Solon with the others, instead of inserting them in the niches opposite my bed, where I wish to contemplate them by the first light of morning, the first objects opening on my eyes. For, without the one, not only poetry but eloquence too, and every high species of literary composition, might have remained until this day, in all quarters of the globe, incondite and indigested: and without the other even Athens herself might have explored her way in darkness, and never have exhibited to us Romans the prototypes of those laws on which our glory hath arisen, and the loss of which we are destined to lament as our last and greatest.

*Quinctus.* Within how few minutes has the night closed in upon us! Nothing is left discernible of the promontories, or the long irregular breakers under them. We have before

us only a faint glimmering from the shells in our path, and from the blossoms of the arbutus.

*Marcus.* The little solitary Circean hill, and even the nearer, loftier, and whiter rocks of Anxur, are become indistinguishable. We leave our Cato and our Lucullus ; we leave Cornelia and her children, the scenes of friendship and the recollections of greatness, for Lepidus and Octavius and Antonius ; and who knows whether this birthday, between which and us so few days intervene, may not be, as it certainly will be the least pleasurable, the last !

*Quinctus.* Do not despond my brother !

*Marcus.* I am as far from despondency and dejection as from joy and cheerfulness. Death has two aspects : dreary and sorrowful to those of prosperous, mild and almost genial to those of adverse, fortune. Her countenance is old to the young, and youthful to the aged : to the former her voice is importunate, her gait terrific ; the latter she approaches like a bedside friend, and calls in a whisper that invites to rest. To us, my Quinctus, advanced as we are on our way, weary from its perplexities and dizzy from its precipices, she gives a calm welcome : let her receive a cordial one.

If life is a present which anyone foreknowing its contents would have willingly declined, does it not follow that anyone would as willingly give it up, having well tried what they are ? I speak of the reasonable, the firm, the virtuous ; not of those who, like bad governors, are afraid of laying down the powers and privileges they have been proved unworthy of holding. Were it certain that the longer we live the wiser we become and the happier, then indeed a long life would be desirable ; but since on the contrary our mental strength decays, and our enjoyments of every kind not only sink and cease, but diseases and sorrows come in place of them, if any wish is rational, it is surely the wish that we should go away unshaken by years, undepressed by griefs, and undespoiled of our better faculties. Life and death appear more certainly ours than whatsoever else ; and yet hardly can that be called ours, which comes without our knowledge, and goes without it ; or that which we cannot put aside if we

would, and indeed can anticipate but little. There are few who can regulate life to any extent ; none who can order the things it shall receive or exclude. What value then should be placed upon it by the prudent man, when duty or necessity calls him away ? Or what reluctance should he feel on passing into a state where at least he must be conscious of fewer checks and inabilities ? Such, my brother, as the brave commander, when from the secret and dark passages of some fortress wherein implacable enemies besieged him, having performed all his duties and exhausted all his munition, he issues at a distance into open day.

*Imaginary Conversations.*

## WILLIAM HAZLITT

### 76. CALIBAN

THE character of Caliban is generally thought (and justly so) to be one of the author's masterpieces. It is not indeed pleasant to see this character on the stage any more than it is to see the god Pan personated there. But in itself it is one of the wildest and most abstracted of all Shakespeare's characters, whose deformity, whether of body or mind, is redeemed by the power and truth of the imagination displayed in it. It is the essence of grossness, but there is not a particle of vulgarity in it. Shakespeare has described the brutal mind of Caliban in contact with the pure and original forms of nature; the character grows out of the soil where it is rooted, uncontrolled, uncouth and wild, uncramped by any of the meanness of custom. It is "of the earth, earthy." It seems almost to have been dug out of the ground, with a soul instinctively superadded to it answering to its wants and origin. Vulgarity is not natural coarseness, but conventional coarseness, learnt from others, contrary to, or without an entire conformity of natural power and disposition; as fashion is the common-place affectation of what is elegant and refined without any feeling of the essence of it. Schlegel, the admirable German critic on Shakespeare, observes that Caliban is a poetical character, and "always speaks in blank verse."

*Characters of Shakespeare's Plays.*

## 77. ON A SUN-DIAL

*Horas non numero nisi serenas*—is the motto of a sun-dial near Venice. There is a softness and a harmony in the words and in the thought unparalleled. Of all conceits it is surely the most classical. "I count only the hours that are serene." What a bland and care-dispelling feeling! How the shadows seem to fade on the dial-plate as the sky lours, and time presents only a blank unless as its progress is marked by what is joyous, and all that is not happy sinks into oblivion! What a fine lesson is conveyed to the mind—to take no note of time but by its benefits, to watch only for the smiles and neglect the frowns of fate, to compose our lives of bright and gentle moments, turning always to the sunny side of things, and letting the rest slip from our imaginations, unheeded or forgotten! How different from the common art of self-tormenting! For myself, as I rode along the Brenta, while the sun shone hot upon its sluggish, slimy waves, my sensations were far from comfortable, but the reading this inscription on the side of a glaring wall in an instant restored me to myself; and still, whenever I think of or repeat it, it has the power of wafting me into the region of pure and blissful abstraction. I cannot help fancying it to be a legend of Popish superstition. Some monk of the dark ages must have invented and bequeathed it to us, who, loitering in trim gardens and watching the silent march of time, as his fruits ripened in the sun or his flowers scented the balmy air, felt a mild langour pervade his senses, and having little to do or to care for, determined (in imitation of his sun-dial) to efface that little from his thoughts or draw a veil over it, making of his life one long dream of quiet! *Horas non numero nisi serenas*—he might repeat, when the heavens were overcast, and the gathering storm scattered the falling leaves, and turn to his books and wrap himself in his golden studies! Out of some such mood of mind, indolent, elegant, thoughtful, this exquisite device (speaking volumes) must have originated.

*Sketches and Essays.*

## 78. CHURCH BELLS

FOREIGNERS, with all their tricks and contrivances upon clocks and time-pieces, are strangers to the sound of village bells, though perhaps a people that can dance may dispense with them. They impart a pensive, wayward pleasure to the mind, and are a kind of chronology of happy events, often serious in the retrospect—births, marriages and so forth. Coleridge calls them “the poor man’s only music.” A village spire in England peeping from its cluster of trees is always associated in imagination with this cheerful accompaniment, and may be expected to pour its joyous tidings on the gale. In Catholic countries you are stunned with the everlasting tolling of bells to prayers or for the dead. In the Apennines, and other wild and mountainous districts of Italy, the little chapel-bell with its simple tinkling sound has a romantic and charming effect. The monks in former times appear to have taken a pride in the construction of bells as well as churches; and some of those of the great cathedrals abroad (as at Cologne and Rouen) may be fairly said to be hoarse with counting the flight of ages. The chimes in Holland are a nuisance. They dance in the hours and the quarters. They leave no respite to the imagination. Before one set has done ringing in your ears, another begins. You do not know whether the hours move or stand still, go backwards or forwards, so fantastical and perplexing are their accompaniments. Time is a more staid personage, and not so full of gambols.

*Sketches and Essays.*

## 79. ON GOING A JOURNEY

ONE of the pleasantest things in the world is going a journey; but I like to go by myself. I can enjoy society in a room; but out of doors, nature is company enough for me. I am then never less alone than when alone.

“The fields his study, nature was his book.”

I cannot see the wit of walking and talking at the same time. When I am in the country I wish to vegetate like the country. I am not for criticizing hedgerows and black cattle. I go out of town in order to forget the town and all that is in it. There are those who for this purpose go to watering-places, and carry the metropolis with them. I like more elbow-room, and fewer incumbrances. I like solitude, when I give myself up to it, for the sake of solitude ; nor do I ask for

“a friend in my retreat,  
Whom I may whisper, solitude is sweet.”

The soul of a journey is liberty, perfect liberty—to think, feel, do, just as one pleases. We go a journey chiefly to be free of all impediments and of all inconveniences ; to leave ourselves behind ; much more to get rid of others. It is because I want a little breathing-space to muse on indifferent matters, where contemplation

“May plume her feathers and let grow her wings,  
That in the various bustle of resort  
Were all too ruffled, and sometimes impair’d,”

that I absent myself from the town for a while, without feeling at a loss the moment I am left by myself. Instead of a friend in a post-chaise or in a Tilbury, to exchange good things with and vary the same stale topics over again, for once let me have a truce with impertinence. Give me the clear blue sky over my head, and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a three hours' march to dinner—and then to thinking ! It is hard if I cannot start some game on these lone heaths. I laugh, I run, I leap, I sing for joy. From the point of yonder rolling cloud I plunge into my past being, and revel there, as the sunburnt Indian plunges headlong into the wave that wafts him to his native shore. Then long-forgotten things, like “sunken wrack and sunless treasures,” burst upon my eager sight, and I begin to feel, think, and be myself again. Instead of an awkward silence, broken by attempts at wit or dull commonplaces, mine is that undisturbed silence of the heart which alone is

perfect eloquence. No one likes puns, alliterations, antitheses, argument, and analysis better than I do ; but I sometimes had rather be without them. "Leave, oh leave me to my repose !" I have just now other business in hand which would seem idle to you, but is with me "very stuff o' the conscience." Is not this wild rose sweet without a comment? Does not this daisy leap to my heart set in its coat of emerald? Yet if I were to explain to you the circumstance that has so endeared it to me, you would only smile. Had I not better then keep it to myself, and let it serve me to brood over from here to yonder craggy point, and from thence onward to the far-distant horizon? I should be but bad company all that way, and therefore prefer being alone. I have heard it said that you may, when the moody fit comes on, walk or ride on by yourself and indulge your reveries. But this looks like a breach of manners, a neglect of others, and you are thinking all the time that you ought to rejoin your party. "Out upon such half-faced fellowship," say I. I like to be either entirely to myself, or entirely at the disposal of others ; to talk or be silent, to walk or sit still, to be sociable or solitary.

*Table-Talk.*

## LEIGH HUNT

### 80. SORROWS

A GRECIAN philosopher being asked why he wept for the death of his son, since the sorrow was in vain, replied, "I weep on that account." And his answer became his wisdom. It is only for sophists to contend that we, whose eyes contain the fountains of tears, need never give way to them. It would be unwise not to do so on some occasions. Sorrow unlocks them in her balmy moods. The first bursts may be bitter and overwhelming; but the soil on which they pour would be worse without them. They refresh the fever of the soul—the dry misery which parches the countenance into furrows, and renders us liable to our most terrible "flesh-quakes."

There are sorrows, it is true, so great, that to give them some of the ordinary vents is to run a hazard of being overthrown. These we must rather strengthen ourselves to resist, or bow quietly and drily down, in order to let them pass over us, as the traveller does the wind of the desert. But where we feel that tears would relieve us, it is false philosophy to deny ourselves at least that first refreshment; and it is always false consolation to tell people that because they cannot help a thing, they are not to mind it. The true way is, to let them grapple with the unavoidable sorrow, and try to win it into gentleness by a reasonable yielding. There are griefs so gentle in their very nature that it would be worse than false heroism to refuse them a tear. Of this kind are the deaths of infants. Particular circumstances

may render it more or less advisable to indulge in grief for the loss of a little child ; but, in general, parents should be no more advised to repress their first tears on such an occasion, than to repress their smiles towards a child surviving, or to indulge in any other sympathy. It is an appeal to the same gentle tenderness ; and such appeals are never made in vain. The end of them is an acquittal from the harsher bonds of affliction—from the tying down of the spirit to one melancholy idea.

It is the nature of tears of this kind, however strongly they may gush forth, to run into quiet waters at last. We cannot easily, for the whole course of our lives, think with pain of any good and kind person whom we have lost. It is the divine nature of their qualities to conquer pain and death itself ; to turn the memory of them into pleasure ; to survive with a placid aspect in our imaginations. We are writing at this moment just opposite a spot which contains the grave of one inexpressibly dear to us. We see from our windows the trees about it, and the church spire. The green fields lie around. The clouds are travelling overhead, alternately taking away the sunshine and restoring it. The vernal winds, piping of the flowery summer-time, are nevertheless calling to mind the far distant and dangerous ocean, which the heart that lies in that grave had many reasons to think of. And yet the sight of this spot does not give us pain. So far from it, it is the existence of that grave which doubles every charm of the spot ; which links the pleasures of our childhood and manhood together ; which puts a hushing tenderness in the winds and a patient joy upon the landscape ; which seems to unite heaven and earth, mortality and immortality, the grass of the tomb and the grass of the green field ; and gives a more maternal aspect to the whole kindness of Nature. It does not hinder gaiety itself. Happiness was what its tenant, through all her troubles, would have diffused. To diffuse happiness, and to enjoy it, is not only carrying on her wishes, but realizing her hopes ; and gaiety, freed from its only pollutions, malignity and want of sympathy, is but a child playing about the knees of its mother.

The remembered innocence and endearments of a child stand us instead of virtues that have died older. Children have not exercised the voluntary offices of friendship; they have not chosen to be kind and good to us; nor stood by us, from conscious will, in the hour of adversity. But they have shared their pleasures and pains with us as well as they could; the interchange of good offices between us has, of necessity, been less mingled with the troubles of the world; the sorrow arising from their death is the only one which we can associate with their memories. These are happy thoughts that cannot die. Our loss may always render them pensive; but they will not always be painful. It is a part of the benignity of Nature that pain does not survive like pleasure, at any time, much less where the cause of it is an innocent one. The smile will remain reflected by memory, as the moon reflects the light upon us when the sun has gone into heaven.

*Essay—The Deaths of Little Children.*

## 81. BOOKS AND PLACES

I HAVE seen various places in Europe, which have been rendered interesting by great men and their works; and I never found myself the worse for seeing them, but the better. I seem to have made friends with them in their own houses; to have walked, and talked, and suffered, and enjoyed with them: and if their books have made the places better, *the books themselves were there which made them so*, and which *grew out of them*. The poet's hand was on the place, blessing it. I can no more separate this idea from the spot, than I can take away from it any other beauty. Even in London, I find the principle hold good in me, though I have lived there many years, and of course associated it with every common-place the most unpoetical. The greater still includes the less: and I can no more pass through Westminster, without thinking of Milton; or the Borough, without thinking of Chaucer and

Shakespeare; or Gray's Inn, without calling Bacon to mind; or Bloomsbury Square, without Steele and Akenside—than I can prefer brick and mortar to wit and poetry, or not see a beauty upon it beyond architecture, in the splendour of the recollection. I once had duties to perform, which kept me out late at night, and severely taxed my health and spirits. My path lay through a neighbourhood in which Dryden lived; and though nothing could be more common-place, and I used to be tired to the heart and soul of me, I never hesitated to go a little out of the way, purely that I might pass through Gerard Street, and so give myself the shadow of a pleasant thought.

*Essay—The World of Books.*

## THOMAS DE QUINCEY

### 82. THE OPIUM-EATER'S DREAM

Then suddenly would occur a dream of far different character—a tumultuous dream—commencing with a music such as now I often heard in sleep—music of preparation and of awakening suspense. The undulations of fast-gathering tumults were like the opening of the Coronation Anthem; and, like that, gave the feeling of a multitudinous movement, of infinite cavalcades filing off, and the tread of innumerable armies. The morning was come of a mighty day—a day of crisis and of ultimate hope for human nature, then suffering mysterious eclipse, and labouring in some dread extremity. Somewhere, but I knew not where—somehow, but I knew not how—by some beings, but I knew not by whom—a battle, a strife, an agony, was travelling through all its stages—was evolving itself, like the catastrophe of some mighty drama, with which my sympathy was the more insupportable from deepening confusion as to its local scene, its cause, its nature, and its undecipherable issue. I (as usual in dreams, where, of necessity, we make ourselves central to every movement) had the power, and yet had not the power, to decide it. I had the power, if I could raise myself to will it, and yet again had not the power, for the weight of twenty Atlantics was upon me, or the oppression of inexpressible guilt. “Deeper than ever plummet sounded,” I lay inactive. Then, like a chorus, the passion deepened. Some greater interest was at stake, some mightier cause, than ever yet the sword had pleaded,

or trumpet had proclaimed. Then came sudden alarms; hurryings to and fro; trepidations of innumerable fugitives, I knew not whether from the good cause or the bad; darkness and lights; tempest and human faces; and at last with the sense that all was lost, female forms, and the features that were worth all the world to me; and but a moment allowed—and clasped hands, with heart-breaking partings, and then—everlasting farewells! and, with a sigh such as the caves of hell sighed when the incestuous mother uttered the abhorred name of Death, the sound was reverberated—everlasting farewells! and again, and yet again reverberated—everlasting farewells! And I awoke in struggles, and cried aloud, “I will sleep no more”!

*Confessions of an English Opium-Eater.*

### 83. THE AFFLICTION OF CHILDHOOD

ON Sunday mornings I went with the rest of my family to church: it was a church on the ancient model of England, having aisles, galleries, organ, all things ancient and venerable, and the proportions majestic. Here, whilst the congregation knelt through the long Litany, as often as we came to that passage, so beautiful amongst many that are so, where God is supplicated on behalf of “all sick persons and young children,” and that he would “show his pity upon all prisoners and captives,” I wept in secret; and raising my streaming eyes to the upper windows of the galleries, saw, on days when the sun was shining, a spectacle as affecting as ever prophet can have beheld. The *sides* of the windows were rich with storied glass; through the deep purples and crimson streamed the golden light; emblazonries of heavenly illumination (from the sun) mingling with the earthly emblazonries (from art and its gorgeous colouring) of what is grandest in man. *There* were the apostles that had trampled upon earth, and the glories of earth, out of celestial love to man. *There* were the martyrs that had borne witness to the

truth through flames, through torments, and through armies of fierce, insulting faces. *There* were the saints who, under intolerable pangs, had glorified God by meek submission to his will. And all the time, whilst this tumult of sublime memorials held on as deep chords from some accompaniment in the bass, I saw through the wide central field of the window, where the glass was *un*coloured, white, fleecy clouds sailing over the azure depths of the sky; were it but a fragment or a hint of such a cloud, immediately under the flash of my sorrow-haunted eye, it grew and shaped itself into visions of beds with white lawny curtains; and in the beds lay sick children, dying children, that were tossing in anguish, and weeping clamorously for death. God, for some mysterious reason, could not suddenly release them from their pain; but he suffered the beds, as it seemed, to rise slowly through the clouds; slowly the beds ascended into the chambers of the air; slowly also his arms descended from the heavens, that he and his young children, whom in Palestine, once and for ever, he had blessed, though they *must* pass slowly through the dreadful chasm of separation, might yet meet the sooner. These visions were self-sustained. These visions needed not that any sound should speak to me, or music mould my feelings. The hint from the litany, the fragment from the clouds—these and the storied windows were sufficient. But not the less the blare of the tumultuous organ wrought its own separate creations. And often times in anthems, when the mighty instrument threw its vast columns of sound, fierce yet melodious, over the voices of the choir—high in arches, when it seemed to rise, surmounting and overriding the strife of the vocal parts, and gathering by strong coercion the total storm into unity—sometimes I seemed to rise and walk triumphantly upon those clouds which, but for a moment before, I had looked up to as mementos of prostrate sorrow; yes, sometimes under the transfigurations of music, felt of grief itself as of a fiery chariot for mounting victoriously above the causes of grief. God speaks to children, also, in dreams, and by the oracles that lurk in darkness. But in solitude, above all

things, when made vocal to the meditative heart by the truths and services of a national church, God holds with children "communion undisturbed." Solitude, though it may be silent as light, is, like light, the mightiest of agencies ; for solitude is essential to man. All men come into this world *alone* ; all leave it *alone*. Even a little child has a dread, whispering consciousness, that, if he should be summoned to travel into God's presence, no gentle nurse will be allowed to lead him by the hand, nor mother to carry him in her arms, nor little sister to share his trepidations. King and priest, warrior and maiden, philosopher and child, all must walk those mighty galleries alone. The solitude, therefore, which in this world appals or fascinates a child's heart, is but the echo of a far deeper solitude, through which already he has passed, and of another solitude, deeper still, through which he *has* to pass : reflex of one solitude—pre-figuration of another.

Oh, burden of solitude, that cleavest to man through every stage of his being ! in his birth, which *has* been—in his life which *is*—in his death which *shall* be—mighty and essential solitude ! that wast, and art, and art to be ; thou broodest, like the Spirit of God moving upon the surface of the deeps, over every heart that sleeps in the nurseries of Christendom. Like the vast laboratory of the air, which, seeming to be nothing, or less than the shadow of a shade, hides within itself the principles of all things, solitude for the meditating child is the Agrippa's mirror of the unseen universe. Deep is the solitude of millions who, with hearts welling forth love, have none to love them. Deep is the solitude of those who, under secret griefs, have none to pity them. Deep is the solitude of those who, fighting with doubts or darkness, have none to counsel them. But deeper than the deepest of these solitudes is that which broods over childhood under the passion of sorrow—bringing before it, at intervals, the final solitude which watches for it, and is waiting for it within the gates of death. Oh, mighty and essential solitude, that wast, and art, and art to be ! thy kingdom is made perfect in the grave ; but even over those that keep watch outside the

grave, like myself, an infant of six years old, thou stretchest out a sceptre of fascination.

*Autobiography*, ch. 2.

#### 84. THE ENGLISH MAIL-COACH

FOR my own feeling this post-office service spoke as by some mighty orchestra, where a thousand instruments, all disregarding each other and so far in danger of discord, yet all obedient as slaves to the supreme *baton* of some great leader, terminate in a perfection of harmony like that of heart, brain and lungs in a healthy animal organisation. But finally that particular element in this whole combination which most impressed myself, and through which it is that to this hour Mr. Palmer's mail-coach system tyrannises over my dreams by terror and terrific beauty, lay in the awful political mission which at that time it fulfilled. The mail-coach it was that distributed over the face of the land, like the opening of apocalyptic vials, the heart-shaking news of Trafalgar, of Salamanca, of Vittoria, of Waterloo. These were the harvests that in the grandeur of their reaping redeemed the tears and blood in which they had been sown. Neither was the meanest peasant so much below the grandeur and the sorrow of the times as to confound battles such as these which were gradually moulding the destinies of Christendom with the vulgar conflicts of ordinary warfare, so often no more than gladiatorial trials of national prowess. The victories of England in this stupendous contest rose of themselves as natural *Te Deums* to heaven; and it was felt by the thoughtful that such victories, at such a crisis of general prostration, were not more beneficial to ourselves than finally to France our enemy, and to the nations of all western or central Europe through whose pusillanimity it was that the French domination had prospered.

*The English Mail-Coach*, Part i.

## 85. JOAN OF ARC

BISHOP OF BEAUVAIS! thy victim died in fire upon a scaffold—thou upon a down bed. But, for the departing minutes of life, both are oftentimes alike. At the farewell crisis, when the gates of death are opening, and flesh is resting from its struggles, oftentimes the tortured and the torturer have the same truce from carnal torment; both sink together into sleep; together both sometimes kindle into dreams. When the mortal mists were gathering fast upon you two, bishop and shepherd girl—when the pavilions of life were closing up their shadowy curtains about you—let us try, through the gigantic glooms, to decipher the flying features of your separate visions.

The shepherd girl that had delivered France—she, from her dungeon, she, from her baiting at the stake, she, from her duel with fire, as she entered her last dream—saw Domrémy, saw the fountain of Domrémy, saw the pomp of forests in which her childhood had wandered. That Easter festival which man had denied to her languishing heart—that resurrection of spring-time, which the darkness of dungeons had intercepted from *her*, hungering after the glorious liberty of forests—were by God given back into her hands, as jewels that had been stolen from her by robbers. With those, perhaps (for the minutes of dreams can stretch into ages), was given back to her by God the bliss of childhood. By special privilege for *her* might be created, in this farewell dream, a second childhood, innocent as the first; but not, like *that*, sad with the gloom of a fearful mission in the rear. This mission had now been fulfilled. The storm was weathered; the skirts even of that mighty storm were drawing off. The blood that she was to reckon for had been exacted; the tears that she was to shed in secret had been paid to the last. The hatred to herself in all eyes had been faced steadily, had been suffered, had been survived. And in her last fight upon the scaffold she had triumphed gloriously; victoriously she had tasted the stings

of death. For all, except this comfort from her farewell dream, she had died—died, amidst the tears of ten thousand enemies—died, amidst the drums and trumpets of armies—died, amidst peals redoubling upon peals, volleys upon volleys, from the saluting clarions of martyrs.

Bishop of Beauvais! because the guilt-burdened man is in dreams haunted and waylaid by the most frightful of his crimes, and because upon that fluctuating mirror—rising (like the mocking mirrors of mirage in Arabian deserts) from the fens of death—most of all are reflected the sweet countenances which the man has laid in ruins; therefore I know, bishop, that you also, entering your final dream, saw Domrémy. That fountain, of which the witnesses spoke so much, showed itself to your eyes in pure morning dew; but neither dew, nor the holy dawn, could cleanse away the bright spots of innocent blood upon its surface. By the fountain, bishop, you saw a woman seated, that hid her face. But, as you draw near, the woman raises her wasted features. Would Domrémy know them again for the features of her child? Ah, but you know them, bishop, well! Oh, mercy! What a groan was *that* which the servants, waiting outside the bishop's dream at his bedside, heard from his labouring heart, as at this moment he turned away from the fountain and the woman, seeking rest in the forests afar off. Yet not so to escape the woman, whom once again he must behold before he dies. In the forests to which he prays for pity, will he find a respite? What a tumult, what a gathering of feet is there! In the glades where only wild deer should run, armies and nations are assembling; towering in the fluctuating crowd are phantoms that belong to departed hours. There is the great English Prince, Regent of France. There is my Lord of Winchester, the princely cardinal, that died and made no sign. There is the bishop of Beauvais, clinging to the shelter of thickets. What building is that which hands so rapid are raising? Is it a martyr's scaffold? Will they burn the child of Domrémy a second time? No, it is a tribunal that rises to the clouds; and two nations stand around it waiting for a trial. Shall my Lord of Beauvais sit

again upon the judgment-seat, and again number the hours for the innocent? Ah no! he is the prisoner at the bar. Already all is waiting: the mighty audience is gathered, the Court is hurrying to their seats, the witnesses are arrayed, the trumpets are sounding, the judge is taking his place. Oh! but this is sudden. My lord, have you no counsel? "Counsel I have none; in heaven above, or on earth beneath, counsellor there is none now that would take a brief from *me*: all are silent." Is it, indeed, come to this? Alas! the time is short, the tumult is wondrous, the crowd stretches away into infinity; but yet I will search in it for somebody to take your brief: I know of somebody that will be your counsel. Who is this that cometh from Domrémy? Who is she in bloody coronation robes from Rheims? Who is she that cometh with blackened flesh from walking the furnaces of Rouen? This is she, the shepherd girl, counsellor that had none for herself, whom I choose, bishop, for yours. She it is, I engage, that shall take my lord's brief. She it is, bishop, that would plead for you; yes, bishop, SHE,—when heaven and earth are silent.

*Collected Writings.*

## SIR WILLIAM NAPIER

### 86. CHARACTER OF SIR JOHN MOORE

THUS ended the career of Sir John Moore, a man whose uncommon capacity was sustained by the purest virtue, and governed by a disinterested patriotism more in keeping with the primitive than the luxurious age of a great nation. His tall graceful person, his dark searching eyes, strongly defined forehead, and singularly expressive mouth, indicated a noble disposition and a refined understanding. The lofty sentiments of honour habitual to his mind, were adorned by a subtle playful wit, which gave him in conversation an ascendancy he always preserved by the decisive vigour of his actions. He maintained the right with a vehemence bordering upon fierceness, and every important transaction in which he was engaged increased his reputation for talent, and confirmed his character as a stern enemy to vice, a steadfast friend to merit, a just and faithful servant of his country. The honest loved him, the dishonest feared him. For while he lived he did not shun, but scorned and spurned the base, and with characteristic propriety they spurned at him when he was dead.

A soldier from his earliest youth, Moore thirsted for the honours of his profession. He knew himself worthy to lead a British army, and hailed the fortune which placed him at the head of the troops destined for Spain. As the stream of time passed the inspiring hopes of triumph disappeared, but the austere glory of suffering remained, and with a firm heart he accepted that gift of a severe fate.

Confident in the strength of his genius, he disregarded the clamours of presumptuous ignorance. Opposing sound military views to the foolish projects so insolently thrust upon him by the ambassador, he conducted his long and arduous retreat with sagacity, intelligence, and fortitude ; no insult disturbed, no falsehood deceived him, no remonstrance shook his determination ; fortune frowned without subduing his constancy ; death struck, but the spirit of the man remained unbroken when his shattered body scarcely afforded it a habitation. Having done all that was just towards others, he remembered what was due to himself. Neither the shock of the mortal blow, nor the lingering hours of acute pain which preceded his dissolution, could quell the pride of his gallant heart, or lower the dignified feeling with which, conscious of merit, he at the last moment asserted his right to the gratitude of the country he had served so truly.

If glory be a distinction, for such a man death is not a leveller.

*History of the War in the Peninsula, Bk. 4, ch. 5.*

## 87. THE BRITISH FUSILIERS AT ALBUERA, 1811

SUCH a gallant line, issuing from the midst of the smoke and rapidly separating itself from the confused and broken multitude, startled the enemy's masses, which were increasing and pressing onwards as to an assured victory ; they wavered, hesitated, and then vomiting forth a storm of fire, hastily endeavoured to enlarge their front, while a fearful discharge of grape from all their artillery whistled through the British ranks. Myers was killed, Cole and the three colonels, Ellis Blakeney and Hawkshawe, fell wounded and the fusilier battalions, struck by the iron tempest, reeled and staggered like sinking ships ; but suddenly and sternly recovering they closed on their terrible enemies, and then was seen with what a strength and majesty the British soldier

fight. In vain did Soult with voice and gesture animate his Frenchmen, in vain did the hardiest veterans break from the crowded columns and sacrifice their lives to gain time for the mass to open out on such a fair field; in vain did the mass itself bear up, and, fiercely striving, fire indiscriminately upon friends and foes, while the horsemen hovering on the flank threatened to charge the advancing line. Nothing could stop that astonishing infantry. No sudden burst of undisciplined valour, no nervous enthusiasm weakened the stability of their order, their flashing eyes were bent on the dark columns in their front, their measured tread shook the ground, their dreadful volleys swept away the head of every formation, their deafening shouts overpowered the dissonant cries that broke from all parts of the tumultuous crowd, as slowly and with a horrid carnage it was pushed by the incessant vigour of the attack to the farthest edge of the hill. In vain did the French reserves mix with the struggling multitude to sustain the fight, their efforts only increased the irremediable confusion, and the mighty mass, breaking off like a loosened cliff, went headlong down the steep: the rain flowed after in streams discoloured with blood, and eighteen hundred unwounded men, the remnant of six thousand unconquerable British soldiers, stood triumphant on the fatal hill !

*History of the War in the Peninsula, Bk. 12, ch. 6.*

## PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

### 88. POETRY

POETRY is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds. We are aware of evanescent visitations of thought and feeling sometimes associated with place or person, sometimes regarding our own mind alone, and always arising unforeseen and departing unbidden, but elevating and delightful beyond all expression ; so that even in the desire and regret they leave, there cannot but be pleasure, participating as it does in the nature of its object. It is as it were the interpenetration of a diviner nature through our own ; but its footsteps are like those of a wind over the sea, which the coming calm erases, and whose traces remain only, as on the wrinkled sand which paves it. These and corresponding conditions of being are experienced principally by those of the most delicate sensibility and the most enlarged imagination ; and the state of mind produced by them is at war with every base desire. The enthusiasm of virtue, love, patriotism, and friendship, is essentially linked with such emotions ; and whilst they last, self appears as what it is, an atom to a universe. Poets are not only subject to these experiences as spirits of the most refined organization, but they can colour all that they combine with the evanescent hues of this ethereal world ; a word, a trait in the representation of a scene or a passion, will touch the enchanted chord, and reanimate, in those who have ever experienced these emotions, the sleeping, the cold, the buried image of the past. Poetry thus makes immortal all that is best and most beautiful in the world ; it

arrests the vanishing apparitions which haunt the inter-lunations of life, and veiling them, or in language or in form, sends them forth among mankind, bearing sweet news of kindred joy to those with whom their sisters abide—abide, because there is no portal of expression from the caverns of the spirit which they inhabit into the universe of things. Poetry redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man.

Poetry turns all things to loveliness; it exalts the beauty of that which is most beautiful, and it adds beauty to that which is most deformed; it marries exultation and horror, grief and pleasure, eternity and change; it subdues to union under its light yoke, all irreconcilable things. It transmutes all that it touches, and every form moving within the radiance of its presence is changed by wondrous sympathy to an incarnation of the spirit which it breathes: its secret alchemy turns to potable gold the poisonous waters which flow from death through life; it strips the veil of familiarity from the world, and lays bare the naked and sleeping beauty, which is the spirit of its forms.

All things exist as they are perceived; at least in relation to the percipient. "The mind is its own place, and of itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven." But poetry defeats the curse which binds us to be subjected to the accident of surrounding impressions. And whether it spreads its own figured curtain, or withdraws life's dark veil from before the scene of things, it equally creates for us a being within our being. It makes us the inhabitants of a world to which the familiar world is a chaos. It reproduces the common universe of which we are portions and percipients, and it purges from our inward sight the film of familiarity which obscures from us the wonder of our being. It compels us to feel that which we perceive, and to imagine that which we know. It creates anew the universe, after it has been annihilated in our minds by the recurrence of impressions blunted by reiteration. It justifies the bold and true words of Tasso: *Non merita nome di creatore, se non Iddio ed il Poeta.*<sup>1</sup>

### *A Defence of Poetry.*

<sup>1</sup> "None deserves the name of creator, save God and the Poet."

## 89. THE TEMPLES OF POSIDONIA (PAESTUM)

WE slept at Salerno, and the next morning, before daybreak, proceeded to Posidonia. The night had been tempestuous, and our way lay by the sea sand. It was utterly dark, except when the long line of wave burst, with a sound like thunder, beneath the starless sky, and cast up a kind of mist of cold white lustre. When morning came, we found ourselves travelling in a wide desert plain, perpetually interrupted by wild irregular glens, and bounded on all sides by the Apennines and the sea. Sometimes it was covered with forest, sometimes dotted with underwood, or mere tufts of fern and furze, and the wintry dry tendrils of creeping plants. I have never, but in the Alps, seen an amphitheatre of mountains so magnificent. After travelling fifteen miles, we came to a river, the bridge of which had been broken, and which was so swollen that the ferry would not take the carriage across. We had, therefore, to walk seven miles of a muddy road, which led to the ancient city across the desolate Maremma. The air was scented with the sweet smell of violets of an extraordinary size and beauty. At length we saw the sublime and massive colonnades, skirting the horizon of the wilderness. We entered by the ancient gate, which is now no more than a chasm in the rock-like wall. Deeply sunk in the ground beside it were the ruins of a sepulchre, which the ancients were in the habit of building beside the public way. The first temple, which is the smallest, consists of an outer range of columns, quite perfect, and supporting a perfect architrave and two shattered frontispieces. The proportions are extremely massy, and the architecture entirely unornamented and simple. These columns do not seem more than forty feet high, but the perfect proportions diminish the apprehension of their magnitude: it seemed as if inequality and irregularity of form were requisite to force on us the relative idea of greatness. The scene from between the columns of the temple consists on one side of the sea, to which the gentle hill

on which it is built slopes, and on the other, of the grand amphitheatre of the loftiest Apennines, dark purple mountains, crowned with snow, and intersected there by long bars of hard and leaden-coloured cloud. The effect of the jagged outline of mountains, through groups of enormous columns on one side, and on the other the level horizon of the sea, is inexpressibly grand. The second temple is much larger and also more perfect. Beside the outer range of columns, it contains an interior range of column above column, and the ruins of a wall which was the screen of the penetralia. With little diversity of ornament, the order of architecture is similar to that of the first temple. The columns in all are fluted, and built of a porous volcanic stone, which time has dyed with a rich and yellow colour. The columns are one-third larger, and like that of the first, diminish from the base to the capital, so that, but for the chastening effect of their admirable proportions, their magnitude would, from the delusion of perspective, seem greater, not less, than it is; though perhaps we ought to say, not that this symmetry diminishes your apprehension of their magnitude, but that it overpowers the idea of relative greatness, by establishing within itself a system of relations destructive of your idea of its relation with other objects, on which our ideas of size depend. The third temple is what they call a Basilica: three columns alone remain of the interior range; the exterior is perfect, but that the cornice and frieze in many places have fallen. This temple covers more ground than either of the others, but its columns are of an intermediate magnitude between those of the second and the first.

We only contemplated these sublime monuments for two hours, and of course could only bring away so imperfect a conception of them as is the shadow of some half-remembered dream.

*Letter to T. L. Peacock, Feb. 25, 1819.*

## JOHN KEATS

### 90. PREFACE TO "ENDYMION"

KNOWING within myself the manner in which this Poem has been produced, it is not without a feeling of regret that I make it public.

What manner I mean, will be quite clear to the reader, who must soon perceive great inexperience, immaturity, and every error denoting a feverish attempt, rather than a deed accomplished. The first two books, and indeed the two last, I feel sensible, are not of such completion as to warrant their passing the press; nor should they if I thought a year's castigation would do them any good—it will not: the foundations are too sandy. It is just that this youngster should die away: a sad thought for me, if I had not some hope that while it is dwindling I may be plotting, and fitting myself for verses fit to live.

This may be speaking too presumptuously, and may deserve a punishment; but no feeling man will be forward to inflict it; he will leave me alone, with the conviction that there is not a fiercer hell than the failure in a great object.

This is not written with the least atom of purpose to forestall criticisms of course, but from the desire I have to conciliate men who are competent to look, and who do look with a zealous eye, to the honour of English literature.

The imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination of a man is healthy; but there is a space of life between, in which the soul is in a ferment, the character

undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick-sighted ; thence proceeds mawkishness, and all the thousand bitters which those men I speak of must necessarily taste in going over the following pages.

I hope I have not in too late a day touched the beautiful mythology of Greece, and dulled its brightness ; for I wish to try once more, before I bid it farewell.

Teignmouth, April 10, 1818.

## THOMAS ARNOLD

### 91. HANNIBAL'S VISION

AND here the fulness of his mind, and his strong sense of being the devoted instrument of his country's gods to destroy their enemies, haunted him by night as they possessed him by day. In his sleep, so he told Silenus, he fancied that the supreme god of his fathers had called him into the presence of all the gods at Carthage, who were sitting on their thrones in council. There he received a solemn charge to invade Italy; and one of the heavenly council went with him, and with his army, to guide him on his way. He went on, and his divine guide commanded him, "See that thou look not behind thee." But after a while, impatient of the restraint, he turned to look back, and there he beheld a huge and monstrous form, thick set all over with serpents; wherever it moved, orchards and woods and houses fell crashing before it. He asked of his guide in wonder what was that monster form. The god answered, "Thou seest the desolation of Italy; go on thy way, straight forwards, and cast no look behind." Thus, with no divided heart, and with an entire resignation of all personal and domestic enjoyments for ever, Hannibal went forth, at the age of twenty-seven, to do the work of his country's gods, and to redeem his early vow.

*History of Rome, ch. 43.*

## 92. THE DEATH OF MARCELLUS

A HILL covered with copsewood rose between the two armies, and had been occupied hitherto by neither party ; only Hannibal's light cavalry were used to lurk amongst the trees at its foot, to cut off any stragglers from the enemy's camp. The consuls, it seems, wished to remove their camp—for the two consular armies were now encamped together—to this hill ; or at any rate to occupy it as an entrenched post, from which they might command the enemy's movements. But they resolved to reconnoitre the ground for themselves ; and accordingly they rode forward with 200 cavalry, and a few light-armed soldiers, leaving their troops behind in the camp, with orders to be in readiness on a signal given to advance and take possession of the hill. The party ascended the hill without opposition, and rode on to the side towards the enemy, to take a view of the country in that direction. Meantime the Numidians, who had always one of their number on the look-out, to give timely notice of anything that approached, as they were lurking under the hill, were warned by their scout that a party of Romans were on the heights above them. No doubt he had marked the scarlet war-cloaks of the generals, and the lictors who went before them, and told his companions of the golden prize that fortune had thrown into their hands. The Numidians stole along under the hill, screened by the trees, till they got round it, between the party on the summit and the Roman camp ; then they charged up the ascent, and fell suddenly upon the astonished enemy. The whole affair was over in an instant : Marcellus was run through the body with a spear, and killed on the spot ; his son and Crispinus were desperately wounded , the Etruscan horsemen, who formed the greater part of the detachment, had no inclination to fight in a service which they had been forced to enter ; the Fregellans, who formed the remainder of it, were too few to do anything ; all were obliged to ride for their lives, and to leap their horses down

the broken ground on the hill sides to escape to their camp. The legions in the camp saw the skirmish, but could not come to the rescue in time. Crispinus and the young Marcellus rode in covered with blood, and followed by the scattered survivors of the party; but Marcellus, six times consul, the bravest and stoutest of soldiers, who had dedicated the spoils of the Gaulish king, slain by his own hand, to Jupiter Feretrius in the Capitol, was lying dead on a nameless hill, and his arms and body were Hannibal's.

*History of Rome, ch. 46.*

## THOMAS CARLYLE

### 93. DEATH OF LOUIS XVI

KING LOUIS slept sound, till five in the morning, when Cléry, as he had been ordered, awoke him. Cléry dressed his hair : while this went forward, Louis took a ring from his watch, and kept trying it on his finger ; it was his wedding-ring, which he is now to return to the Queen as a mute farewell. At half-past six, he took the Sacrament : and continued in devotion and conference with Abbé Edgeworth. He will not see his Family ; it were too hard to bear.

At eight, the Municipals enter : the King gives them his Will, and messages and effects ; which they, at first, brutally refuse to take charge of : he gives them a roll of gold pieces, a hundred and twenty-five louis ; these are to be returned to Malesherbes, who had lent them. At nine, Santerre says the hour is come. The King begs yet to retire for three minutes. At the end of three minutes, Santerre again says the hour is come. Stamping on the ground with his right foot, Louis answers : "*Partons*, Let us go."—How the rolling of those drums comes in, through the Temple bastions and bulwarks, on the heart of a queenly wife ; soon to be a widow ! He is gone, then, and has not seen us ? A Queen weeps bitterly ; a King's Sister and Children. Over all these Four does Death also hover : all shall perish miserably save one ; she, as Duchesse d'Angoulême, will live,—not happily.

At the Temple Gate were some faint cries, perhaps from the voices of pitiful women : "Grâce ! Grâce !" Through

the rest of the streets there is silence as of the grave. No man not armed is allowed to be there : the armed, did any even pity, dare not express it, each man overawed by all his neighbours. All windows are down, none seen looking through them. All shops are shut. No wheel-carriage rolls, this morning, in these streets but one only. Eighty-thousand armed men stand ranked, like armed statues of men ; cannons bristle, cannoneers with match burning, but no word or movement : it is as a city enchanted into silence and stone : one carriage with its escort, slowly rumbling, is the only sound. Louis reads, in his Book of Devotion, the Prayers of the Dying : clatter of this death-march falls sharp on the ear, in the great silence ; but the thought would fain struggle heavenward, and forget the Earth.

As the clocks strike ten, behold the Place de la Révolution, once Place de Louis Quinze : the Guillotine, mounted near the old Pedestal where once stood the Statue of that Louis ! Far round, all bristles with cannons and armed men : spectators crowding in the rear ; D'Orléans Egalité there in cabriolet. Swift messengers, *hoquetons*, speed to the Town-hall, every three minutes : near by is the Convention sitting, —vengeful for Lepelletier. Heedless of all, Louis reads his Prayers of the Dying ; not till five minutes yet has he finished ; then the Carriage opens. What temper he is in ? Ten different witnesses will give ten different accounts of it. He is in the collision of all tempers ; arrived now at the black Mahlstrom and descent of Death : in sorrow, in indignation, in resignation struggling to be resigned. "Take care of M. Edgeworth," he straitly charges the Lieutenant who is sitting with them : then they two descend.

The drums are beating : "*Taisez-vous, Silence !*" he cries in a terrible voice, "*d'une voix terrible.*" He mounts the scaffold, not without delay ; he is in puce coat, breeches of gray, white stockings. He strips off the coat ; stands disclosed in a sleeve-waistcoat of white flannel. The Executioners approach to bind him : he spurns, resists ; Abbé Edgeworth has to remind him how the Saviour, in whom men trust, submitted to be bound. He advances to the

edge of the Scaffold, "his face very red," and says: "Frenchmen, I die innocent: it is from the Scaffold and near appearing before God that I tell you so. I pardon my enemies; I desire that France ——" A General on horseback, Santerre or another, prances out, with uplifted hand: "*Tambours!*" The drums drown the voice. "Executioners, do your duty!" The Executioners, desperate lest themselves be murdered (for Santerre and his Armed Ranks will strike, if they do not), seize the hapless Louis: six of them desperate, him singly desperate, struggling there; and bind him to their plank. Abbé Edgeworth, stooping, bespeaks him: "Son of Saint Louis, ascend to Heaven." The Axe clanks down, a King's Life is shorn away. It is Monday the 21st of January, 1793. He was aged Thirty-eight years, four months, and twenty-eight days.

Executioner Samson shows the head; fierce shout of *Vive la République* rises, and swells; caps raised on bayonets, hats waving; students of the College of Four Nations take it up, on the far Quais; fling it over Paris. D'Orleans drives off in his cabriolet: the Townhall Councillors rub their hands, saying, "It is done, It is done." There is dipping of handkerchiefs, of pike-points in the blood. Headsman Samson, though he afterwards denied it, sells locks of the hair: fractions of the puce coat are long after worn in rings.—And so, in some half-hour it is done; and the multitude has all departed. Pastry-cooks, coffee-sellers, milkmen sing out their trivial quotidian cries: the world wags on, as if this were a common day. In the coffeeshouses that evening, says Prudhomme, Patriot shook hands with Patriot in a more cordial manner than usual. Not till some days after, according to Mercier, did public men see what a grave thing it was.

*The French Revolution*: Vol. 3, Bk. 2, ch. 8.

## 94. WORK

IT is all work and forgotten work, this peopled, clothed, articulate-speaking, high-towered, wide-acred World. The

hands of forgotten brave men have made it a World for us ; —they,—honour to them ; they, in *spite* of the idle and the dastard. This English Land, here and now, is the summary of what was found of wise, and noble, and accordant with God's truth, in all the generations of English men. Our English Speech is speakable because there were Hero-Poets of our blood and lineage ; speakable in proportion to the number of these. This land of England has its conquerors, possessors, which change from epoch to epoch, from day to day ; but its real conquerors, creators and eternal proprietors are these following, and their representatives if you can find them : All the Heroic souls that ever were in England, each in their degree ; all the men that ever cut a thistle, drained a puddle out of England, contrived a wise scheme in England, did or said a true and valiant thing in England.

*Past and Present*, Bk. 2.

95. "LABORARE EST ORARE"<sup>1</sup>

ALL true Work is sacred ; in all true Work, were it but true hand-labour, there is something of divineness. Labour, wide as the Earth, has its summit in Heaven. Sweat of the brow ; and up from that to sweat of the brain, sweat of the heart ; which includes all Kepler calculations, Newton meditations, all Sciences, all spoken Epics, all acted Heroisms, Martyrdoms,—up to that "Agony of bloody sweat," which all men have called divine ! O brother, if this is not "worship," then I say, the more pity for worship ; for this is the noblest thing yet discovered under God's sky. Who art thou that complainest of thy life of toil ? Complain not. Look up, my wearied brother ; see thy fellow Workmen there, in God's Eternity ; surviving there, they alone surviving ; sacred Band of the Immortals, celestial Bodyguard of the Empire of Mankind. Even in the weak Human Memory they survive so long, as saints, as heroes, as gods ; they alone surviving :

<sup>1</sup> "Work is worship."

peopling, they alone, the unmeasured solitudes of Time ! To thee Heaven, though severe, is *not* unkind ; Heaven is kind,—as a noble Mother ; as that Spartan Mother, saying while she gave her son his shield, “ With it, my son, or upon it ! ” Thou too shalt return *home* in honour ; to thy far-distant Home, in honour ; doubt it not,—if in the battle thou keep thy shield ! Thou, in the Eternities and deepest Death-kingdoms, art not an alien ; thou everywhere art a denizen ! Complain not ; the very Spartans did not *complain*.

*Past and Present*, Bk. 3.

## THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

### 96. THE TRIAL OF WARREN HASTINGS

IN the mean time, the preparations for the trial had proceeded rapidly; and on the thirteenth of February, 1788, the sittings of the Court commenced. There have been spectacles more dazzling to the eye, more gorgeous with jewellery and cloth of gold, more attractive to grown-up children, than that which was then exhibited at Westminster; but, perhaps, there never was a spectacle so well calculated to strike a highly cultivated, a reflecting, an imaginative mind. All the various kinds of interest which belong to the near and to the distant, to the present and to the past, were collected on one spot, and in one hour. All the talents and all the accomplishments which are developed by liberty and civilisation were now displayed, with every advantage that could be derived both from co-operation and from contrast. Every step in the proceedings carried the mind either backward, through many troubled centuries, to the days when the foundations of our constitution were laid; or far away, over boundless seas and deserts, to dusky nations living under strange stars, worshipping strange gods, and writing strange characters from right to left. The High Court of Parliament was to sit, according to forms handed down from the days of the Plantagenets, on an Englishman accused of exercising tyranny over the lord of the holy city of Benares, and over the ladies of the princely house of Oude.

The place was worthy of such a trial. It was the great hall of William Rufus, the hall which had resounded with acclamations at the inauguration of thirty kings, the hall which had witnessed the just sentence of Bacon and the just absolution of Somers, the hall where the eloquence of Strafford had for a moment awed and melted a victorious party inflamed with just resentment, the hall where Charles had confronted the High Court of Justice with the placid courage which has half redeemed his fame. Neither military nor civil pomp was wanting. The avenues were lined with grenadiers. The streets were kept clear by cavalry. The peers, robed in gold and ermine, were marshalled by the heralds under Garter King-at-arms. The judges in their vestments of state attended to give advice on points of law. Near a hundred and seventy lords, three fourths of the Upper House as the Upper House then was, walked in solemn order from their usual place of assembling to the tribunal. The junior baron present led the way, George Eliott, Lord Heathfield, recently ennobled for his memorable defence of Gibraltar against the fleets and armies of France and Spain. The long procession was closed by the Duke of Norfolk, Earl Marshal of the realm, by the great dignitaries, and by the brothers and sons of the King. Last of all came the Prince of Wales, conspicuous by his fine person and noble bearing. The grey old walls were hung with scarlet. The long galleries were crowded by an audience such as has rarely excited the fears or the emulation of an orator. There were gathered together, from all parts of a great, free, enlightened, and prosperous empire, grace and female loveliness, wit and learning, the representatives of every science and of every art. There were seated round the Queen the fair-haired young daughters of the house of Brunswick. There the Ambassadors of great Kings and Commonwealths gazed with admiration on a spectacle which no other country in the world could present. There Siddons, in the prime of her majestic beauty, looked with emotion on a scene surpassing all the imitations of the stage. There the historian of the Roman Empire thought of the days when Cicero

pleaded the cause of Sicily against Verres, and when, before a senate which still retained some show of freedom, Tacitus thundered against the oppressor of Africa. There were seen, side by side, the greatest painter and the greatest scholar of the age. The spectacle had allured Reynolds from that casel which has preserved to us the thoughtful foreheads of so many writers and statesmen, and the sweet smiles of so many noble matrons. It had induced Parr to suspend his labours in that dark and profound mine from which he had extracted a vast treasure of erudition, a treasure too often buried in the earth, too often paraded with injudicious and inelegant ostentation, but still precious, massive, and splendid. There appeared the voluptuous charms of her to whom the heir of the throne had in secret plighted his faith. There too was she, the beautiful mother of a beautiful race, the Saint Cecilia whose delicate features, lighted up by love and music, art has rescued from the common decay. There were the members of that brilliant society which quoted, criticized, and exchanged repartees, under the rich peacock-hangings of Mrs. Montague. And there the ladies whose lips, more persuasive than those of Fox himself, had carried the Westminster election against palace and treasury, shone round Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire.

The sergeants made proclamation. Hastings advanced to the bar and bent his knee. The culprit was indeed not unworthy of that great presence. He had ruled an extensive and populous country, and made laws and treaties, had sent forth armies, had set up and pulled down princes. And in his high place, he had so borne himself, that all had feared him, that most had loved him, and that hatred itself could deny him no title to glory, except virtue. He looked like a great man, and not like a bad man. A person small and emaciated, yet deriving dignity from a carriage which, while it indicated deference to the court, indicated also habitual self-possession and self-respect, a high and intellectual forehead, a brow pensive, but not gloomy, a mouth of inflexible decision, a face pale and worn, but serene, on which was written, as legibly as under the picture in the council-

chamber at Calcutta, *Meus aequa in arduis*; such was the aspect with which the great pro-consul presented himself to his judges.

*Essay on Warren Hastings* (1841).

## 97. THE BURIAL OF CHATHAM

CHATHAM, at the time of his decease, had not in both Houses of Parliament, ten personal adherents. Half the public men of his age had been estranged from him by his errors, and the other half by the exertions which he had made to repair his errors. His last speech had been an attack at once on the policy pursued by the government and on the policy recommended by the opposition. But death restored him to his old place in the affection of his country. Who could hear unmoved of the fall of that which had been so great, and which had stood so long? The circumstances, too, seemed rather to belong to the tragic stage than to real life. A great statesman, full of years and honours, led forth to the Senate House by a son of rare hopes, and stricken down in full council while straining his feeble voice to rouse the drooping spirit of his country, could not but be remembered with peculiar veneration and tenderness. Detraction was overawed. The voice even of just and temperate censure was mute. Nothing was remembered but the lofty genius, the unsullied probity, the undisputed services, of him who was no more. For once, all parties were agreed. A public funeral, a public monument, were eagerly voted. The debts of the deceased were paid. A provision was made for his family. The City of London requested that the remains of the great man whom she had so long loved and honoured might rest under the dome of her magnificent cathedral. But the petition came too late. Everything was already prepared for the interment in Westminster Abbey.

Though men of all parties had concurred in decreeing posthumous honours to Chatham, his corpse was

attended to the grave almost exclusively by opponents of the government. The banner of the lordship of Chatham was borne by Colonel Barré, attended by the Duke of Richmond and Lord Rockingham. Burke, Savile and Dunning upheld the pall. Lord Camden was conspicuous in the procession. The chief mourner was young William Pitt. After a lapse of more than twenty-seven years, in a season as dark and perilous, his own shattered frame and broken heart were laid, with the same pomp, in the same consecrated mould.

Chatham sleeps near the northern door of the Church, in a spot which has ever since been appropriated to statesmen, as the other end of the same transept has long been to poets. Mansfield rests there, and the second William Pitt, and Fox, and Grattan, and Canning, and Wilberforce. In no other cemetery do so many great citizens lie within so narrow a space. High over those venerable graves towers the stately monument of Chatham, and from above, his effigy, graven by a cunning hand, seems still, with eagle face and outstretched arm, to bid England be of good cheer, and to hurl defiance at her foes. The generation which reared that memorial of him has disappeared. The time has come when the rash and indiscriminate judgments which his contemporaries passed on his character may be calmly revised by history. And history, while for the warning of vehement, high and daring natures she notes his many errors, will yet deliberately pronounce that, among the eminent men whose bones lie near his, scarcely one has left a more stainless and none a more splendid name.

*Essay—The Earl of Chatham (1844).*

## 98. THE FRIENDSHIP OF BOOKS

JUST such is the feeling which a man of liberal education naturally entertains towards the great minds of former ages. The debt which he owes to them is incalculable. They

have guided him to truth. They have filled his mind with noble and graceful images. They have stood by him in all vicissitudes, comforters in sorrow, nurses in sickness, companions in solitude. These friendships are exposed to no danger from the occurrences by which other attachments are weakened or dissolved. Time glides on; fortune is inconstant; tempers are soured; bonds which seemed indissoluble are daily sundered by interest, by emulation, or by caprice. But no such cause can affect the silent converse which we hold with the highest of human intellects. That placid intercourse is disturbed by no jealousies or resentments. These are the old friends who are never seen with new faces, who are the same in wealth and in poverty, in glory and in obscurity. With the dead there is no rivalry. In the dead there is no change. Plato is never sullen. Cervantes is never petulant. Demosthenes never comes unseasonably. Dante never stays too long. No difference of political opinion can alienate Cicero. No heresy can excite the horror of Bossuet.

*Essay on Lord Bacon (1837).*

## 99. THE RESTORATION

THAT there would be a restoration now seemed almost certain; but whether there would be a peaceable restoration was matter of painful doubt. The soldiers were in a gloomy and savage mood. They hated the title of King. They hated the name of Stuart. They hated Presbyterianism much, and Prelacy more. They saw with bitter indignation that the close of their long domination was approaching, and that a life of inglorious toil and penury was before them. They attributed their ill fortune to the weakness of some generals, and to the treason of others. One hour of their beloved Oliver might even now restore the glory which had departed. Betrayed, disunited, and left without any chief in whom they could confide, they were yet to be

dreaded. It was no light thing to encounter the rage and despair of fifty thousand fighting men, whose backs no enemy had ever seen. Monk, and those with whom he acted, were well aware that the crisis was most perilous. They employed every art to soothe and to divide the discontented warriors. At the same time vigorous preparation was made for a conflict. The army of Scotland, now quartered in London, was kept in good humour by bribes, praises, and promises. The wealthy citizens grudged nothing to a red coat, and were indeed so liberal of their best wine, that warlike saints were sometimes seen in a condition not very honourable either to their religious or to their military character. Some refractory regiments Monk ventured to disband. In the meantime the greatest exertions were made by the provisional government, with the strenuous aid of the whole body of the gentry and magistracy, to organize the militia. In every county the train bands were held ready to march; and this force cannot be estimated at less than a hundred and twenty thousand men. In Hyde Park twenty thousand citizens, well-armed and accoutred, passed in review, and showed a spirit which justified the hope that, in case of need, they would fight manfully for their shops and firesides. The fleet was heartily with the nation. It was a stirring time, a time of anxiety, yet of hope. The prevailing opinion was that England would be delivered, but not without a desperate and bloody struggle, and that the class which had so long ruled by the sword would perish by the sword.

Happily the dangers of a conflict were averted. There was indeed one moment of extreme peril. Lambert escaped from his confinement, and called his comrades to arms. The flame of civil war was actually rekindled; but by prompt and vigorous exertion it was trodden out before it had time to spread. The luckless imitator of Cromwell was again a prisoner. The failure of his enterprise damped the spirit of the soldiers; and they sullenly resigned themselves to their fate.

The new Parliament, which, having been called without

the royal writ, is more accurately described as a Convention, met at Westminster. The Lords repaired to the Hall, from which they had, during more than eleven years, been excluded by force. Both Houses instantly invited the King to return to his country. He was proclaimed with pomp never before known. A gallant fleet convoyed him from Holland to the coast of Kent. When he landed, the cliffs of Dover were covered by thousands of gazers, among whom scarcely one could be found who was not weeping with delight. The journey to London was a continued triumph. The whole road from Rochester was bordered by booths and tents, and looked like an interminable fair. Everywhere flags were flying, bells and music sounding, wine and ale flowing in rivers to the health of him whose return was the return of peace, of law, and of freedom. But in the midst of the general joy, one spot presented a dark and threatening aspect. On Blackheath the army was drawn up to welcome the sovereign. He smiled, bowed, and extended his hand graciously to the lips of the colonels and majors. But all his courtesy was vain. The countenances of the soldiers were sad and lowering, and, had they given way to their feelings, the festive pageant of which they reluctantly made a part, would have had a mournful and bloody end. But there was no concert among them. Discord and defection had left them no confidence in their chiefs or in each other. The whole array of the City of London was under arms. Numerous companies of militia had assembled from various parts of the realm, under the command of loyal noblemen and gentlemen, to welcome the King. That great day closed in peace, and the restored wanderer reposed safe in the palace of his ancestors.

*History of England, ch. i.*

## JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

### 100. THE VALUE OF A UNIVERSITY TRAINING

IF then a practical end must be assigned to a University course, I say it is that of training good members of society. Its art is the art of social life, and its end is fitness for the world. It neither confines its views to particular professions on the one hand, nor creates heroes or inspires genius on the other. Works indeed of genius fall under no art ; heroic minds come under no rule ; a University is not a birthplace of poets or of immortal authors, of founders of schools, leaders of colonies, or conquerors of nations. It does not promise a generation of Aristotles or Newtons, of Napoleons or Washingtons, of Raphaels or Shakespeares, though such miracles of nature it has before now contained within its precincts. Nor is it content on the other hand with forming the critic or the experimentalist, the economist or the engineer, though such too it includes within its scope. But a University training is the great ordinary means to a great but ordinary end ; it aims at raising the intellectual tone of society, at cultivating the public mind, at purifying the national taste, at supplying true principles to popular enthusiasm and fixed aims to popular aspiration, at giving enlargement and sobriety to the ideas of the age, at facilitating the exercise of political power, and refining the intercourse of private life. It is the education which gives a man a clear conscious view of his own opinions and judgments, a truth in developing them, an eloquence in expressing them, and a force in urging them. It teaches him to see things as they are, to go right

to the point, to disentangle a skein of thought, to detect what is sophistical, and to discard what is irrelevant. It prepares him to fill any post with credit, and to master any subject with facility. It shows him how to accommodate himself to others, how to throw himself into their state of mind, how to bring before them his own, how to influence them, how to come to an understanding with them, how to bear with them. He is at home in any society, he has common ground with every class; he knows when to speak and when to be silent; he is able to converse, he is able to listen; he can ask a question pertinently, and gain a lesson seasonably, when he has nothing to impart himself; he is ever ready, yet never in the way; he is a pleasant companion, and a comrade you can depend upon; he knows when to be serious and when to trifle, and he has a sure tact which enables him to trifle with gracefulness and to be serious with effect. He has the repose of a mind which lives in itself, while it lives in the world, and which has resources for its happiness at home when it cannot go abroad. He has a gift which serves him in public, and supports him in retirement, without which good fortune is but vulgar, and with which failure and disappointment have a charm. The art which tends to make a man all this, is in the object which it pursues as useful as the art of wealth or the art of health, though it is less susceptible of method, and less tangible, less certain, less complete in its result.

*The Scope and Nature of University Education.*

## 101. THE CHARACTER OF A GENTLEMAN

HENCE it is that it is almost a definition of a gentleman to say he is one who never inflicts pain. This description is both refined and, as far as it goes, accurate. He is mainly occupied in merely removing the obstacles which hinder the free and unembarrassed action of those about him; and he concurs with their movements rather than takes the initiative

himself. His benefits may be considered as parallel to what are called comforts or conveniences in arrangements of a personal nature, like an easy chair or a good fire, which do their part in dispelling cold and fatigue, though nature provides both means of rest and animal heat without them. The true gentleman in like manner carefully avoids whatever may cause a jar or a jolt in the minds of those with whom he is cast ;—all clashing of opinion, or collision of feeling, all restraint, or suspicion, or gloom, or resentment ; his great concern being to make every one at their ease and at home. He has his eyes on all his company ; he is tender towards the bashful, gentle towards the distant, and merciful towards the absurd ; he can recollect to whom he is speaking ; he guards against unseasonable allusions, or topics which may irritate ; he is seldom prominent in conversation, and never wearisome. He makes light of favours while he does them, and seems to be receiving when he is conferring. He never speaks of himself except when compelled, never defends himself by a mere retort, he has no ears for slander or gossip, is scrupulous in imputing motives to those who interfere with him, and interprets everything for the best. He is never mean or little in his disputes, never takes unfair advantage, never mistakes personalities or sharp sayings for arguments, or insinuates evil which he dare not say out. From a long-sighted prudence he observes the maxim of the ancient sage, that we should ever conduct ourselves towards our enemy as if he were one day to be our friend. He has too much good sense to be affronted at insults, he is too well employed to remember injuries and too indolent to bear malice. He is patient, forbearing and resigned on philosophical principles ; he submits to pain because it is inevitable, to bereavement because it is irreparable, and to death because it is his destiny. If he engages in controversy of any kind, his disciplined intellect preserves him from the blundering discourtesy of better though less educated minds ; who, like blunt weapons, tear and hack instead of cutting clean, who mistake the point in argument, waste their strength on trifles, misconceive their adversary, and leave

the question more involved than they find it. He may be right or wrong in his opinion, but he is too clear-headed to be unjust; he is as simple as he is forcible and as brief as he is decisive. Nowhere shall we find greater candour, consideration, indulgence: he throws himself into the minds of his opponents, he accounts for their mistakes. He knows the weakness of human reason as well as its strength, its province and its limits. If he be an unbeliever, he will be too profound and large-minded to ridicule religion or to act against it; he is too wise to be a dogmatist or fanatic in his infidelity.

*The Scope and Nature of University Education.*

## 102. ST. PHILIP NERI

HE lived in an age as traitorous to the interests of Catholicism as any that preceded it, or can follow it. He lived at a time when pride mounted high, and the senses held rule; a time when kings and nobles never had more of state and homage, and never less of personal responsibility and peril; when mediaeval winter was receding, and the summer sun of civilisation was bringing into leaf and flower a thousand forms of luxurious enjoyment; when a new world of thought and beauty had opened upon the human mind in the discovery of the treasures of classic literature and art. He saw the great and the gifted, dazzled by the enchantress and drinking in the magic of her song; he saw the high and the wise, the student and the artist, painting and poetry and sculpture and music and architecture, drawn within her range and circling round the abyss: he saw heathen forms mounting thence and forming in the thick air: all this he saw, and he perceived that the mischief was to be met, not with argument, not with science, not with protests and warnings, not by the recluse or the preacher, but by means of the great counter-fascination of purity and truth. He was raised up to do a work almost peculiar in the Church,—

not to be a Jerome Savonarola, though Philip had a true devotion towards him and a tender memory of his Florentine house; not to be a St. Carlo, though in his beaming countenance Philip had recognised the aureole of a saint; not to be a St. Ignatius, wrestling with the foe, though Philip was termed the Society's bell of call, so many subjects did he send to it; not to be a St. Francis Xavier, though Philip had longed to shed his blood for Christ in India with him; not to be a St. Caietan, or hunter of souls, for Philip preferred, as he expressed it, tranquilly to cast in his net to gain them: he preferred to yield to the stream, and direct the current which he could not stop, of science, literature, art and fashion, and to sweeten and to sanctify what God had made very good and man had spoilt.

And so he contemplated as the idea of his mission, not the propagation of the faith, nor the exposition of doctrine, nor the catechetical schools; whatever was exact and systematic pleased him not; he put from him monastic rule and authoritative speech, as David refused the armour of his king. No; he would be but an ordinary individual priest as others: and his weapons should be but unaffected humility and unpretending love. All he did was to be done by the light and fervour and convincing eloquence of his personal character and his easy conversation. He came to the Eternal City and he sat himself down there, and his home and his family gradually grew up around him by the spontaneous accession of materials from without. He did not so much seek his own as draw them to him. He sat in his small room, and they in their gay worldly dresses, the rich and the well-born, as well as the simple and the illiterate, crowded into it. In the mid-heats of summer, in the frosts of winter, still was he in that low and narrow cell at San Girolamo, reading the hearts of those who came to him, and curing their souls' maladies by the very touch of his hand. It was a vision of the Magi worshipping the infant Saviour, so pure and innocent, so sweet and beautiful was he; and so loyal and so dear to the gracious Virgin Mother. And they who came remained gazing and listening, till at length first one

and then another threw off their bravery and took his poor cassock and girdle instead : or, if they kept it, it was to put haircloth under it, or to take on them a rule of life, while to the world they looked as before.

*The Scope and Nature of University Education.*

### 103. THE POWER OF THE CLASSICS

LET us consider too, how differently young and old are affected by the words of some classic author, such as Homer or Horace. Passages which to a boy are but rhetorical commonplaces, neither better nor worse than a hundred others which any clever writer might supply, which he gets by heart and thinks very fine, and imitates, as he thinks, successfully, in his own flowing versification, at length come home to him when long years have passed, and he has had experience of life, and pierce him, as if he had never before known them, with their sad earnestness and vivid exactness. Then he comes to understand how it is that lines, the birth of some chance morning or evening at an Ionian festival, or among the Sabine hills, have lasted generation after generation, for thousands of years, with a power over the mind, and a charm which the current literature of his own day, with all its obvious advantages, is utterly unable to rival. Perhaps this is the reason of the mediaeval opinion about Virgil, as of a prophet or a magician ; his single words and phrases, his pathetic half lines, giving utterance as the voice of Nature herself, to that pain and weariness, yet hope of better things, which is the experience of her children in every time.

*Grammar of Assent.*

## NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

### 104. THE FAUN OF PRAXITELES

THE Faun is the marble image of a young man, leaning his right arm on the trunk or stump of a tree: one hand hangs carelessly by his side; in the other he holds the fragment of a pipe, or some such sylvan instrument of music. His only garment—a lion's skin, with the claws upon his shoulder—falls half way down his back, leaving the limbs and entire front of the figure nude. The form, thus displayed, is marvellously graceful, but has a fuller and more rounded outline, more flesh, and less of heroic muscle than the old sculptors were wont to assign to their types of masculine beauty. The character of the face corresponds with the figure; it is most agreeable in outline and feature, but rounded and somewhat voluptuously developed, especially about the throat and chin; the nose is almost straight, but very slightly curves inward, thereby acquiring an indescribable charm of geniality and humour. The mouth, with its full yet delicate lips, seems so nearly to smile outright, that it calls forth a responsive smile. The whole statue—unlike anything else that ever was wrought in that severe material of marble—conveys the idea of an amiable and sensual creature, easy, mirthful, apt for jollity, yet not incapable of being touched by pathos. It is impossible to gaze long at this stone image without conceiving a kindly sentiment towards it, as if its substance were warm to the touch, and imbued with actual life. It comes very close to some of our pleasantest sympathies.

*Transformation*, ch. i.

## ALEXANDER WILLIAM KINGLAKE

### 105 A CHILD'S READING OF HOMER

I TOO, loved Homer, but not with a scholar's love. The most humble and pious amongst women was yet so proud a mother that she could teach her first-born son, no Watts' hymns—no collects for the day; she could teach him in earliest childhood, no less than this—to find a home in his saddle, and to love old Homer, and all that old Homer sung. True it is, that the Greek was ingeniously rendered into English—the English of Pope even, but it is not such a mesh as that, that can screen an earnest child from the fire of Homer's battles.

I pored over the *Odyssey* as over a story-book, hoping and fearing for the hero whom yet I partly scorned. But the *Iliad*—line by line, I clasped it to my brain with reverence as well as with love. As an old woman deeply trustful sits reading her Bible because of the world to come, so as though it would fit me for the coming strife of this temporal world, I read, and read the *Iliad*. Even outwardly, it was not like other books, it was throned in towering folios. There was a preface or dissertation printed in type still more majestic than the rest of the book; this I read, but not till my enthusiasm for the *Iliad* had already run high. The writer compiling the opinions of many men, and chiefly of the ancients, set forth, I know not how quaintly, that the *Iliad* was all in all to the human race—that it was history—poetry—revelation—that the works of men's hands were folly and vanity, and would pass away like the dreams of

a child, but that the Kingdom of Homer would endure for ever and ever.

I assented with all my soul. I read, and still read ; I came to know Homer. A learned commentator knows something of the Greeks, in the same sense as an oil and colour man may be said to know something of painting, but take an untamed child, and leave him alone for twelve months with any translation of Homer, and he will be nearer by twenty centuries to the spirit of old Greece ; *he* does not stop in the ninth year of the siege, to admire this or that group of words — *he* has no books in his tent, but he shares in vital counsels with the “ King of men,” and knows the inmost souls of the impending Gods ; how profanely he exults over the powers divine, when they are taught to dread the prowess of mortals ! and most of all how he rejoices when the God of War flies howling from the spear of Diomed, and mounts into Heaven for safety ! Then the beautiful episode of the 6th Book : the way to feel this is not to go casting about, and learning from pastors and masters how best to admire it ; the impatient child is not grubbing for beauties, but pushing the siege ; the women vex him with their delays and their talking—the mention of the nurse is personal, and little sympathy has he for the child that is young enough to be frightened at the nodding plume of a helmet, but all the while that he thus chafes at the pausing of the action, the strong vertical light of Homer’s Poetry is blazing so full upon the people and things of the Iliad, that soon to the eyes of the child they grow familiar as his mother’s shawl ; yet of this great gain he is unconscious, and on he goes, vengefully thirsting for the best blood of Troy, and never remitting his fierceness, till almost suddenly it is changed for sorrow—the new and generous sorrow that he learns to feel, when the noblest of all his foes lies sadly dying at the Scaean gate.

*Eothen*, ch. 4.

## 106. THE DESERT

AFTER the fifth day of my journey, I no longer travelled over shifting hills, but came upon a dead level—a dead level bed of sand, quite hard and studded with small shining pebbles.

The heat grew fierce; there was no valley nor hollow, no hill, no mound, no shadow of hill nor of mound, by which I could mark the way I was making. Hour by hour I advanced, and saw no change—I was still the very centre of a round horizon; hour by hour I advanced, and still there was the same, and the same, and the same—the same circle of flaming sky—the same circle of sand still glaring with light and fire. Over all the heaven above—over all the earth beneath, there was no visible power that could balk the fierce Will of the Sun; “he rejoiced as a strong man to run a race; his going forth was from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it; and there was nothing hid from the heat thereof.” From pole to pole, and from the East to the West, he brandished his fiery sceptre as though he had usurped all Heaven and Earth. As he bid the soft Persian in ancient times, so now, and fiercely too, he bid me bow down and worship him; so now in his pride he seemed to command me and say, “Thou shalt have none other gods but me.” I was all alone before him. There were these two pitted together, and face to face—the mighty Sun for one, and for the other—this poor, pale, solitary Self of mine, that I always carry about with me.

But on the eighth day, and before I had yet turned away from Jehovah for the glittering god of the Persians, there appeared a dark line upon the edge of the forward horizon, and soon the line deepened into a delicate fringe, that sparkled here and there as though it were sewn with diamonds. There, then, before me were the gardens and the minarets of Egypt, and the mighty work of the Nile, and I (the eternal Ego that I am!)—I had lived to see, and I saw them.

When evening came I was still within the confines of the Desert, and my tent was pitched as usual, but one of my Arabs stalked away rapidly towards the West, without telling me of the errand on which he was bent. After a while he returned ; he had toiled on a graceful service ; he had travelled all the way on to the border of the living world, and brought me back for token an ear of rice, full, fresh and green.

The next day I entered upon Egypt, and floated along (for the delight was as the delight of bathing) through green, wavy fields of rice, and pastures fresh and plentiful, and dived into the cold verdure of groves and gardens, and quenched my hot eyes in shade, as though in deep, rushing waters.

*Eothen*, ch. 17.

## WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

### 107. THE LAST YEARS OF GEORGE III.

THE Princess<sup>1</sup> wrote verses for herself, and there are some pretty plaintive lines attributed to her, which are more touching than better poetry :

Unthinking, idle, wild, and young,  
I laughed, and danced, and talked and sung ;  
And proud of health, of freedom vain,  
Dreamed not of sorrow, care, or pain ;  
Concluding, in those hours of glee,  
That all the world was made for me.

But when the hour of trial came,  
When sickness shook this trembling frame,  
When folly's gay pursuits were o'er,  
And I could sing and dance no more,  
It then occurred, how sad 'twould be,  
Were this world only made for me.

The poor soul quitted it—and ere yet she was dead the agonised father was in such a state, that the officers round him were obliged to set watchers over him, and from November, 1810, George III. ceased to reign. All the world knows the story of his malady : all his story presents no sadder figure than that of the old man, blind and deprived of reason, wandering through the rooms of his palace, addressing imaginary parliaments, reviewing fancied troops, holding ghostly Courts. I have seen his picture as it was taken at this time, hanging in the apartment of his daughter, the Landgravine of Hesse Hombourg—amidst books and Windsor furniture, and a hundred fond reminiscences of her

<sup>1</sup> Princess Amelia.

English home. The poor old father is represented in a purple gown, his snowy beard falling over his breast—the star of his famous Order still idly shining on it. He was not only sightless : he became utterly deaf. All light, all reason, all sound of human voices, all the pleasures of this world of God, were taken from him. Some slight lucid moments he had ; in one of which the Queen, desiring to see him, entered the room, and found him singing a hymn, and accompanying himself at the harpsichord. When he had finished, he knelt down and prayed aloud for her, and then for his family, and then for the nation, concluding with a prayer for himself, that it might please God to avert his heavy calamity from him, but if not, to give him resignation to submit. He then burst into tears, and his reason again fled.

What preacher need moralise on this story ; what words save the simplest are requisite to tell it ? It is too terrible for tears. The thought of such a misery smites me down in submission before the Ruler of Kings and men, the Monarch Supreme over empires and republics, the inscrutable Dispenser of life, death, happiness, victory. “O brothers,” I said to those who heard me first in America—“O brothers ! speaking the same dear mother-tongue—O comrades ! enemies no more, let us take a mournful hand together as we stand by this Royal corpse, and call a truce to battle ! Low he lies, to whom the proudest used to kneel once, and who was cast lower than the poorest : dead, whom millions prayed for in vain. Driven off his throne ; buffeted by rude hands ; with his children in revolt ; the darling of his old age killed before him untimely ; our tear hangs over her breathless lips and cries, ‘Cordelia, Cordelia, stay a little !’

Vex not his ghost—oh ! let him pass—he hates him  
That would upon the rack of this tough world  
Stretch him out longer !

Hush ! Strife and Quarrel, over the solemn grave ! Sound, trumpets, a mournful march ! Fall, dark curtain, upon his pageant, his pride, his grief, his awful tragedy !”

## JOHN BRIGHT

### 108. THE CRIMEAN WAR

AT the same time there is growing up—and, notwithstanding what some hon. Members of this House may think of me, no man regrets it more than I do—a bitter and angry feeling against that class which has for a long period conducted the public affairs of this country. I like political changes when such changes are made as the result, not of passion, but of deliberation and reason. Changes so made are safe, but changes made under the influence of violent exaggeration, or of the violent passions of public meetings, are not changes usually approved by this House or advantageous to the country. I cannot but notice, in speaking to Gentlemen who sit on either side of this House, or in speaking to any one I meet between this House and any of those localities we frequent when this House is up—I cannot, I say, but notice that an uneasy feeling exists as to the news which may arrive by the very next mail from the East. I do not suppose that your troops are to be beaten in actual conflict with the foe, or that they will be driven into the sea ; but I am certain that many homes in England in which there now exists a fond hope that the distant one may return—many such homes may be rendered desolate when the next mail shall arrive. The angel of death has been abroad throughout the land ; you may almost hear the beating of his wings. There is no one, as when the first-born were slain of old, to sprinkle with blood the lintel and the two sideposts of our doors, that he may spare and pass on ; he takes his victims from the

castle of the noble, the mansion of the wealthy, and the cottage of the poor and the lowly, and it is on behalf of all these classes that I make this solemn appeal.

I tell the noble Lord,<sup>1</sup> that if he be ready honestly and frankly to endeavour, by the negotiations about to be opened at Vienna, to put an end to this war, no word of mine, no vote of mine, will be given to shake his power for one single moment, or to change his position in this House. I am sure that the noble Lord is not inaccessible to appeals made to him from honest motives and with no unfriendly feeling. The noble Lord has been for more than forty years a Member of this House. Before I was born he sat upon the Treasury bench, and he has spent his life in the service of his country. He is no longer young, and his life has extended almost to the term allotted to man. I would ask, I would entreat the noble Lord to take a course which, when he looks back upon his whole political career—whatever he may therein find to be pleased with, whatever to regret—cannot but be a source of gratification to him. By adopting that course he would have the satisfaction of reflecting that, having obtained the object of his laudable ambition—having become the foremost subject of the Crown, the director of, it may be, the destinies of his country, and the presiding genius in her councils—he had achieved a still higher and nobler ambition; that he had returned the sword to the scabbard—that at his word torrents of blood had ceased to flow—that he had restored tranquillity to Europe, and saved this country from the indescribable calamities of war.

*Speech in House of Commons, Feb. 23, 1855.*

#### 109. THE WAR IN AMERICA, 1862

I do not blame any man here who thinks the cause of the North hopeless and the restoration of the Union impossible. It may be hopeless; the restoration may be impossible...

<sup>1</sup> Lord Palmerston.

I do not hold the opinion ; but the facts are before us all, and, as far as we can discard passion and sympathy, we are all equally at liberty to form our own opinion. But what I do blame is this. I blame men who are eager to admit into the family of nations a State which offers itself to us, based upon a principle, I will undertake to say, more odious and more blasphemous than was ever heretofore dreamed of in Christian or Pagan, in civilized or in savage times. The leaders of this revolt propose this monstrous thing—that over a territory forty times as large as England the blight and curse of slavery shall be for ever perpetuated.

I cannot believe, for my part, that such a fate will befall that fair land, stricken though it now is with the ravages of war. I cannot believe that civilization, in its journey with the sun, will sink into endless night in order to gratify the ambition of the leaders of this revolt, who seek to

Wade through slaughter to a throne,  
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind.

I have another and a far brighter vision before my gaze. It may be but a vision, but I will cherish it. I see one vast confederation stretching from the frozen North in unbroken line to the glowing South, and from the wild billows of the Atlantic westward to the calmer waters of the Pacific main,—and I see one people, and one language, and one law, and one faith, and over all that wide continent, the home of freedom and a refuge for the oppressed of every race and of every clime.

*Speech at Birmingham, Dec. 18, 1862.*

## JOHN LOTHROP MOTLEY

### 110. THE RELIEF OF LEYDEN, 1574

MEANTIME, the citizens had grown wild with expectation. A dove had been dispatched by Boisot, informing them of his precise position, and a number of citizens accompanied the burgomaster, at nightfall, toward the tower of Hengist. "Yonder," cried the magistrate, stretching out his hand towards Lammen, "yonder, beyond that fort, are bread and meat, and brethren in thousands. Shall all this be destroyed by the Spanish guns, or shall we rush to the rescue of our friends?" "We will tear the fortress to fragments with our teeth and nails," was the reply, "before the relief, so long expected, shall be wrested from us." It was resolved that a sortie, in conjunction with the operations of Boisot, should be made against Lammen with the earliest dawn. Night descended upon the scene, a pitch dark night, full of anxiety to the Spaniards, to the armada, to Leyden. Strange sights and sounds occurred at different moments to bewilder the anxious sentinels. A long procession of lights issuing from the fort was seen to flit across the black face of the waters, in the dead of night, and the whole of the city wall, between the Cow-gate and the Tower of Burgundy, fell with a loud crash. The horror-struck citizens thought that the Spaniards were upon them at last; the Spaniards imagined the noise to indicate a desperate sortie of the citizens. Every thing was vague and mysterious.

Day dawned at length after the feverish night, and the Admiral prepared for the assault. Within the fortress

reigned a death-like stillness, which inspired a sickening suspicion. Had the city, indeed, been carried in the night; had the massacre already commenced; had all this labour and audacity been expended in vain? Suddenly a man was descried, wading breast-high through the water from Lammen towards the fleet, while at the same time, one solitary boy was seen to wave his cap from the summit of the fort. After a moment of doubt the happy mystery was solved. The Spaniards had fled, panic-struck, during the darkness. Their position would still have enabled them, with firmness, to frustrate the enterprise of the patriots, but the hand of God, which had sent the ocean and the tempest to the deliverance of Leyden, had struck her enemies with terror likewise. The lights which had been seen moving during the night were the lanterns of the retreating Spaniards, and the boy who was now waving his triumphant signal from the battlements had alone witnessed the spectacle. So confident was he in the conclusion to which it led him, that he had volunteered at daybreak to go thither all alone. The magistrates, fearing a trap, hesitated for a moment to believe the truth, which soon, however, became quite evident. Valdez, flying himself from Leyderdorp, had ordered Colonel Borgia to retire with all his troops from Lammen. Thus, the Spaniards had retreated at the very moment that an extraordinary accident had laid bare a whole side of the city for their entrance. The noise of the wall, as it fell, only inspired them with fresh alarm; for they believed that the citizens had sallied forth in the darkness, to aid the advancing flood in the work of destruction. All obstacles being now removed, the fleet of Boisot swept by Lammen, and entered the city on the morning of the 3rd of October. Leyden was relieved.

*The Rise of the Dutch Republic, Part 4, ch. 2.*

## JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE

### III. THE BOYHOOD OF GREAT SEAMEN

SOME two miles above the port of Dartmouth, once among the most important harbours in England, on a projecting angle of land which runs out into the river at the head of one of its most beautiful reaches, there has stood for some centuries the Manor House of Greenaway. The water runs deep all the way to it from the sea, and the largest vessels may ride with safety within a stone's throw of the windows. In the latter half of the sixteenth century there must have met, in the hall of this mansion, a party as remarkable as could have been found anywhere in England. Humfrey and Adrian Gilbert, with their half-brother, Walter Raleigh, here, when little boys, played at sailors in the reaches of Long Stream; in the summer evenings doubtless rowing down with the tide to the port, and wondering at the quaint figure-heads and carved prows of the ships which thronged it; or climbing on board, and listening, with hearts beating, to the mariners' tales of the new earth beyond the sunset; and here in later life, matured men, whose boyish dreams had become heroic action, they used again to meet in the intervals of quiet, and the rock is shown underneath the house where Raleigh smoked the first tobacco. Another remarkable man, of whom we shall presently speak more closely, could not fail to have made a fourth at these meetings. A sailor boy of Sandwich, the adjoining parish, John Davis, showed early a genius which could not have escaped the eye of such neighbours, and in the atmosphere of Greenaway he learned

to be as noble as the Gilberts, and as tender and delicate as Raleigh. Of this party, for the present we confine ourselves to the host and owner, Humfrey Gilbert, knighted afterwards by Elizabeth. Led by the scenes of his childhood to the sea and to sea adventures, and afterwards, as his mind unfolded, to study his profession scientifically, we find him as soon as he was old enough to think for himself, or make others listen to him, "amending the great errors of naval sea cards, whose common fault is to make the degree of longitude in every latitude of one common bigness"; inventing instruments for taking observations, studying the form of the earth, and convincing himself that there was a north-west passage, and studying the necessities of his country and discovering the remedies for them in colonization and extended markets for home manufactures, and insisting with so much loudness on these important matters that they reached the all-attentive ears of Walsingham, and through Walsingham were conveyed to the Queen. Gilbert was examined before the Queen's Majesty and the Privy Council, the record of which examination he has himself left to us in a paper which he afterwards drew up, and strange enough reading it is. The most admirable conclusions stand side by side with the wildest conjectures; and invaluable practical discoveries, among imaginations at which all our love for him cannot hinder us from smiling; the whole of it from first to last saturated through and through with his inborn nobility of nature.

*England's Forgotten Worthies.*

## 112. THE PASSING OF THE MIDDLE AGE

FOR, indeed, a change was coming upon the world, the meaning and direction of which even still is hidden from us, a change from era to era. The paths trodden by the footsteps of ages were broken up; old things were passing away, and the faith and the life of ten centuries were dissolving like a dream. Chivalry was dying; the abbey and

the castle were soon together to crumble into ruins ; and all the forms, desires, beliefs, convictions of the old world were passing away, never to return. A new continent had risen up beyond the western sea. The floor of heaven, inlaid with stars, had sunk back into an infinite abyss of immeasurable space ; and the firm earth itself, unfixed from its foundations, was seen to be but a small atom in the awful vastness of the universe. In the fabric of habit in which they had so laboriously built for themselves, mankind were to remain no longer.

And now it is all gone—like an unsubstantial pageant faded ; and between us and the old English there lies a gulf of mystery which the prose of the historian will never adequately bridge. They cannot come to us, and our imagination can but feebly penetrate to them. Only among the aisles of the cathedrals, only as we gaze upon their silent figures sleeping on their tombs, some faint conceptions float before us of what these men were when they were alive ; and perhaps in the sound of church bells, that peculiar creation of mediaeval age, which falls upon the ear like the echo of a vanished world.

*History of England, ch. i.*

## CHARLES KINGSLEY

### 113. THE MEDITERRANEAN

THERE it is at last. The long line of heavenly blue, and over it, far away, the white-peaked lateen sails, and there, close to the rail, beyond the sand-hills, delicate wavelets are breaking for ever on a yellow beach, each in exactly the same place as the one which fell before. One glance shows us children of the Atlantic that we are on a tideless sea.

There it is,—the sacred sea. The sea of all civilization, and almost all history, girdled by the fairest countries in the world ; set there that human beings from all its shores might mingle with each other, and become humane—the sea of Egypt, of Palestine, of Greece, of Italy, of Byzant, of Marseilles, and this Narbonnaise, “more Roman than Rome herself,” to which we owe the greater part of our own progress ; the sea, too, of Algeria, and Carthage, and Cyrene, and fair lands now desolate, surely not to be desolate for ever—the sea of civilization. Not only to the Christian, nor to the classic scholar, but to every man to whom the progress of his race from barbarism toward humanity is dear, should the Mediterranean Sea be one of the most august and precious objects on this globe ; and the first sight of it should inspire reverence and delight, as of coming home—home to a rich inheritance in which he has long believed by hearsay, but which he sees at last with his own mortal corporal eyes.

*Prose Idylls—From Ocean to Sea.*

## JOHN RUSKIN

### 114. AN ENGLISH CATHEDRAL AND ST. MARKS

I WISH that the reader, before I bring him into St. Mark's Place, would imagine himself for a little time in a quiet English cathedral town, and walk with me to the west front of its cathedral. Let us go together up the more retired street, at the end of which we can see the pinnacles of one of the towers, and then through the low grey gateway, with its battlemented top and small latticed window in the centre, into the inner private-looking road or close, where nothing goes in but the carts of the tradesmen who supply the bishop and the chapter, and where there are little shaven grass-plots, fenced in by neat rails, before old-fashioned groups of somewhat diminutive and excessively trim houses, with little oriel and bay windows jutting out here and there, and deep wooden cornices and eaves painted cream colour and white, and small porches to their doors in the shape of cockle-shells, or little, crooked, thick, indescribable wooden gables warped a little on one side; and so forward till we come to larger houses, also old-fashioned, but of red brick, and with gardens behind them, and fruit walls, which show here and there, among the nectarines, the vestiges of an old cloister arch or shaft, and looking in front on the cathedral square itself, laid out in rigid divisions of smooth grass and gravel walk, yet not uncheerful, especially on the sunny side where the canons' children are walking with their nursery-maids. And so, taking care not to tread on the grass, we will go along the straight walk to the west front, and there

stand for a time, looking up at its deep-pointed porches and the dark places between their pillars where there were statues once, and where the fragments, here and there, of a stately figure are still left, which has in it the likeness of a king, perhaps indeed a king on earth, perhaps a saintly king long ago in heaven; and so higher and higher up to the great mouldering wall of rugged sculpture and confused arcades, shattered and grey, and grisly with heads of dragons and mocking fiends, worn by the rain and swirling winds into yet unseemlier shape, and coloured on their stony scales by the deep russet-orange lichen, melancholy gold; and so, higher still, to the bleak towers, so far above that the eye loses itself among the bosses of their traceries, though they are rude and strong, and only sees like a drift of eddying black points, now closing, now scattering, and now settling suddenly into invisible places among the bosses and flowers, the crowd of restless birds that fill the whole square with that strange clangour of theirs, so harsh and yet so soothing, like the cries of birds on a solitary coast between the cliffs and the sea.

Think for a little while of that scene, and the meaning of all its small formalisms, mixed with its serene sublimity. Estimate its secluded, continuous, drowsy felicities, and its evidence of the sense and steady performance of such kind of duties as can be regulated by the cathedral clock; and weigh the influence of those dark towers on all who have passed through the lonely square at their feet for centuries, and on all who have seen them rising far away over the wooded plain, or catching on their square masses the last rays of the sunset, when the city at their feet was indicated only by the mist at the bend of the river. And then let us quickly recollect that we are in Venice, and land at the extremity of the *Calle Lunga San Moisè*, which may be considered as there answering to the secluded street that led us to our English cathedral gateway.

We find ourselves in a paved alley, some seven feet wide where it is widest, full of people, and resonant with cries of itinerant salesmen,—a shriek in their beginning, and dying away into a kind of brazen ringing, all the worse for its

confinement between the high houses of the passage along which we have to make our way. Overhead an inextricable confusion of rugged shutters, and iron balconies and chimney flues pushed out on brackets to save room, and arched windows with projecting sills of Istrian stone, and gleams of green leaves here and there where a fig-tree branch escapes over a lower wall from some inner cortile, leading the eye up to the narrow stream of blue sky high over all. On each side, a row of shops, as densely set as may be, occupying, in fact, intervals between the square stone shafts, about eight feet high, which carry the first floors: intervals of which one is narrow and serves as a door; the other is, in the more respectable shops, wainscoted to the height of the counter and glazed above, but in those of the poorer tradesmen left open to the ground, and the wares laid on benches and tables in the open air, the light in all cases entering at the front only, and fading away in a few feet from the threshold into a gloom which the eye from without cannot penetrate, but which is generally broken by a ray or two from a feeble lamp at the back of the shop, suspended before a print of the Virgin. The less pious shopkeeper sometimes leaves his lamp unlighted, and is contented with a penny print; the more religious one has his print coloured and set in a little shrine with a gilded or figured fringe, with perhaps a faded flower or two on each side, and his lamp burning brilliantly. Here, at the fruiterer's, where the dark-green water-melons are heaped upon the counter like cannon-balls, the Madonna has a tabernacle of fresh laurel leaves; but the pewterer next door has let his lamp out, and there is nothing to be seen in his shop but the dull gleam of the studded patterns on the copper pans, hanging from his roof in the darkness. Next comes a "*Vendita Frittole e Liquori*," where the Virgin, enthroned in a very humble manner beside a tallow candle on a back shelf, presides over certain ambrosial morsels of a nature too ambiguous to be defined or enumerated. But a few steps further on, at the regular wine-shop of the calle, where we are offered "*Vino Nostrani a Soldi 28.32*," the Madonna is in great glory, enthroned

above ten or a dozen large red casks of three-year-old vintage, and flanked by goodly ranks of bottles of Maraschino, and two crimson lamps; and for the evening, when the gondoliers will come to drink out, under her auspices, the money they have gained during the day, she will have a whole chandelier.

A yard or two farther, we pass the hostelry of the Black Eagle, and glancing as we pass through the square door of marble, deeply moulded, in the outer wall, we see the shadows of its pergola of vines resting on an ancient well, with a pointed shield carved on its side; and so presently emerge on the bridge and Campo San Moisè, whence to the entrance into St. Mark's Place, called the Bocca de Piazza (mouth of the square), the Venetian character is nearly destroyed, first by the frightful façade of San Moisè, which we will pause at another time to examine, and then by the modernising of the shops as they near the piazza, and the mingling with the lower Venetian populace of lounging groups of English and Austrians. We will push fast through them into the shadow of the pillars at the end of the "Bocca di Piazza," and then we forget them all; for between those pillars there opens a great light, and, in the midst of it, as we advance slowly, the vast tower of St. Mark seems to lift itself visibly forth from the level field of chequered stones; and, on each side, the countless arches prolong themselves into ranged symmetry, as if the rugged and irregular houses that pressed together above us in the dark alley had been struck back into sudden obedience and lovely order, and all their rude casements and broken walls had been transformed into arches charged with goodly sculpture, and fluted shafts of delicate stone.

And well may they fall back, for beyond those troops of ordered arches there rises a vision out of the earth, and all the great square seems to have opened from it in a kind of awe, that we may see it far away,—a multitude of pillars and white domes, clustered into a long low pyramid of coloured light; a treasure-heap, it seems, partly of gold, and partly of opal and mother-of-pearl, hollowed beneath into five great vaulted porches, ceiled with fair mosaic, and

beset with sculpture of alabaster, clear as amber and delicate as ivory, sculpture fantastic and involved, of palm leaves and lilies, and grapes and pomegranates, and birds clinging and fluttering among the branches, all twined together into an endless network of buds and plumes; and, in the midst of it, the solemn forms of angels, sceptred, and robed to the feet, and leaning to each other across the gates, their figures indistinct among the gleaming of the golden ground through the leaves beside them, interrupted and dim, like the morning light as it faded back among the branches of Eden, when first its gates were angel-guarded long ago. And round the walls of the porches there are set pillars of variegated stones, jasper and porphyry, and deep-green serpentine spotted with flakes of snow, and marbles, that half refuse and half yield to the sunshine, Cleopatra-like, "their bluest veins to kiss"—the shadow, as it steals back from them, revealing line after line of azure undulation, as a receding tide leaves the waved sand; their capitals rich with interwoven tracery, rooted knots of herbage, and drifting leaves of acanthus and vine, and mystical signs, all beginning and ending in the Cross, and above them, in the broad archivolts, a continuous chain of language and of life—angels, and the signs of heaven and the labours of men, each in its appointed season upon the earth; and above these another range of glittering pinnacles, mixed with white arches edged with scarlet flowers,—a confusion of delight, amidst which the breasts of the Greek horses are seen blazing in their breadth of golden strength, and the St. Mark's Lion, lifted on a blue field covered with stars, until at last, as if in ecstasy, the crests of the arches break into a marble foam, and toss themselves far into the blue sky in flashes and wreaths of sculptured spray, as if the breakers on the Lido shore had been frost-bound before they fell, and the sea-nymphs had inlaid them with coral and amethyst.

Between that grim cathedral of England and this, what an interval! There is a type of it in the very birds that haunt them; for, instead of the restless crowd, hoarse-voiced and sable-winged, drifting on the bleak upper air, the St. Mark's

porches are full of doves, that nestle among the marble foliage, and mingle the soft iridescence of their living plumes, changing at every motion, with the tints, hardly less lovely, that have stood unchanged for seven hundred years.

*Stones of Venice*, vol. 2, ch. 4.

### 115. TOMB OF THE DOGE ANDREA DANDOLO

WE are in a low vaulted room<sup>1</sup>; vaulted, not with arches, but with small cupolas starred with gold, and chequered with gloomy figures: in the centre is a bronze font charged with rich bas-reliefs, a small figure of the Baptist standing above it in a single ray of light that glances across the narrow room, dying as it falls from a window high in the wall, and the first thing that it strikes, and the only thing that it strikes brightly, is a tomb. We hardly know if it be a tomb indeed; for it is like a narrow couch set beside the window, low-roofed and curtained, so that it might seem, but that it is some height above the pavement, to have been drawn towards the window, that the sleeper might be wakened early;—Only there are two angels who have drawn the curtain back, and are looking down upon him. Let us look also, and thank that gentle light that rests upon his forehead for ever, and dies away upon his breast.

The face is of a man in middle life, but there are two deep furrows right across the forehead, dividing it like the foundations of a tower: the height of it above is bound by the fillet of the ducal cap. The rest of the features are singularly small and delicate, the lips sharp, perhaps the sharpness of death being added to that of the natural lines; but there is a sweet smile upon them, and a deep serenity upon the whole countenance. The roof of the canopy above has been blue, filled with stars; beneath, in the centre of the tomb on which the figure rests, is a seated figure of the

<sup>1</sup> The Baptistry of St. Mark's.

Virgin, and the border of it all around is of flowers and soft leaves, growing rich and deep, as if in a field in summer.

It is the Doge Andrea Dandolo, a man early great among the great of Venice ; and early lost. She chose him for her king in his 36th year ; he died ten years later, leaving behind him that history to which we owe half of what we know of her former fortunes.

Look round at the room in which he lies. The floor of it is of rich mosaic, encompassed by a low seat of red marble, and its walls are of alabaster, but worn and shattered, and darkly stained with age, almost a ruin,—in places the slabs of marble have fallen away altogether, and the rugged brickwork is seen through the rents, but all beautiful ; the ravaging fissures fretting their way among the islands and channelled zones of the alabaster, and the time-stains on its translucent masses darkened into fields of rich golden brown, like the colour of seaweed when the sun strikes on it through deep sea. The light fades away into the recess of the chamber towards the altar, and the eye can hardly trace the lines of the bas-relief behind it of the baptism of Christ : but on the vaulting of the roof the figures are distinct, and there are seen upon it two great circles, one surrounded by the “Principalities and powers in heavenly places,” of which Milton has expressed the ancient division in a single massy line,

“Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,”

and around the other, the Apostles ; Christ the centre of both ; and upon the walls, again and again repeated, the gaunt figure of the Baptist, in every circumstance of his life and death ; and the streams of the Jordan running down between their cloven rocks ; the axe laid to the root of a fruitless tree that springs upon their shore. “Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire.” Yes, verily : to be baptized with fire, or to be cast therein ; it is the choice set before all men. The march-notes still murmur through the grated window, and mingle with the sounding in our ears of the sentence of

judgment, which the old Greek has written on that Baptistery wall. Venice has made her choice.

He who lies under that stony canopy would have taught her another choice, in his day, if she would have listened to him : but he and his counsels have long been forgotten by her, and the dust lies upon his lips.

*Stones of Venice*, vol. 2, ch. 4.

## 116. THE CAMPAGNA OF ROME

PERHAPS there is no more impressive scene on earth than the solitary extent of the Campagna of Rome under evening light. Let the reader imagine himself for a moment withdrawn from the sounds and motion of the living world, and sent forth alone into this wild and wasted plain. The earth yields and crumbles beneath his foot, tread he never so lightly, for its substance is white, hollow, and carious, like the dusty wreck of the bones of men. The long-knotted grass waves and tosses feebly in the evening wind, and the shadows of its motion shake feverishly along the banks of ruin that lift themselves to the sunlight. Hillocks of mouldering earth heave around him, as if the dead beneath were struggling in their sleep ; scattered blocks of black stone, four-square, remnants of mighty edifices, not one left upon another, lie upon them to keep them down. A dull purple poisonous haze stretches level along the desert, veiling its spectral wrecks of massy ruins, on whose rents the red light rests, like dying fire on defiled altars. The blue ridge of the Alban Mount lifts itself against a solemn space of green, clear, quiet sky. Watch-towers of dark clouds stand steadfastly along the promontories of the Apennines. From the plain to the mountains, the shattered aqueducts, pier beyond pier, melt into the darkness, like shadowy and countless troops of funeral mourners, passing from a nation's grave.

*Modern Painters*, vol. 1, Pref. to 2nd ed.

## 117. THE SOUTH OF ITALY

WE are accustomed to hear the south of Italy spoken of as a beautiful country. Its mountain forms are graceful above others, its sea bays exquisite in outline and hue ; but it is only beautiful in superficial aspect. In closer detail it is wild and melancholy. Its forests are sombre-leaved, labyrinth-stemmed ; the carubbe, the olive, laurel, and ilex, are alike in that strange feverish twisting of their branches, as if in spasms of half human pain :—Avernus forests ; one fears to break their boughs, lest they should cry to us from the rents ; the rocks they shade are of ashes, or thrice-molten lava ; iron sponge whose every pore has been filled with fire. Silent villages, earthquake shaken, without commerce, without industry, without knowledge, without hope, gleam in white ruin from hillside to hillside ; far-winding wrecks of immemorial walls surround the dust of cities long forsaken : the mountain streams moan through the cold arches of their foundations, green with weed, and rage over the heaps of their fallen towers. Far above, in thunder-blue serration, stand the eternal edges of the angry Apennine, dark with rolling impendence of volcanic cloud.

*Modern Painters*, vol. 5, pt. 9, ch. 4.

## 118. GRASS

CONSIDER what we owe merely to the meadow grass, to the covering of the dark ground by that glorious enamel, by the companies of those soft, and countless, and peaceful spears. The fields ! Follow but forth for a little time the thoughts of all that we ought to recognise in those words. All spring and summer is in them—the walks by silent, scented paths—the rests in noonday heat—the joy of herds and flocks—the power of all shepherd life and meditation—the life of sunlight upon the world, falling in emerald streaks, and

failing in soft blue shadows, where else it would have struck upon the dark mould, or scorching dust—pastures beside the pacing brooks—soft banks and knolls of lowly hills—thymy slopes of down overlooked by the blue line of lifted sea—crisp lawns all dim with early dew, or smooth in the evening warmth of barred sunshine, dinted by happy feet, and softening in their fall the sound of loving voices ; all these are summed in those simple words ; and these are not all. We may not measure to the full the depth of this heavenly gift, in our own land ; though still, as we think of it longer, the infinite of that meadow sweetness, Shakspeare's peculiar joy, would open on us more and more, yet we have it but in part. Go out, in the spring time, among the meadows that slope from the shores of the Swiss lakes to the roots of their lower mountains. There, mingled with the taller gentians and the white narcissus, the grass grows deep and free ; and as you follow the winding mountain paths, beneath arching boughs all veiled and dim with blossom,—paths that for ever droop and rise over the green banks and mounds sweeping down in scented undulation, steep to the blue water, studded here and there with new-mown heaps, filling all the air with fainter sweetness—look up towards the higher hills, where the waves of everlasting green roll silently into their long inlets among the shadows of the pines ; and we may, perhaps, at last know the meaning of those quiet words of the 147th psalm, " He maketh grass to grow upon the mountains."

*Modern Painters*, vol. 3, pt. 4, ch. 14.

## 119. TWO BOYHOODS,—GIORGIONE AND TURNER

BORN half-way between the mountains and the sea—that young George of Castelfranco—of the Brave Castle :—Stout George they called him, George of Georges, so goodly a boy he was—Giorgione.

Have you ever thought what a world his eyes opened on—fair, searching eyes of youth? What a world of mighty life, from those mountain roots to the shore;—of loveliest life, when he went down, yet so young, to the marble city—and became himself as a fiery heart to it?

A city of marble, did I say? nay, rather a golden city, paved with emerald. For truly, every pinnacle and turret glanced and glowed, overlaid with gold, or bossed with jasper. Beneath, the unsullied sea drew, in deep breathing, to and fro, its eddies of green wave. Deep-hearted, majestic, terrible as the sea,—the men of Venice moved in sway of power and war; pure as her pillars of alabaster, stood her mothers and maidens; from foot to brow, all noble, walked her knights; the low bronzed gleaming of sea-rusted armour shot angrily under their blood-red mantle-folds. Fearless, faithful, patient, impenetrable, implacable,—every word a fate—sate her senate. In hope and honour, lulled by flowing of wave around their isles of sacred sand, each with his name written and the cross graved at his side, lay her dead. A wonderful piece of world. Rather, itself a world. It lay along the face of the waters, no larger, as its captains saw it from their masts at evening, than a bar of sunset that could not pass away; but for its power, it must have seemed to them as if they were sailing in the expanse of heaven, and this a great planet, whose orient edge widened through ether. A world from which all ignoble care and petty thoughts were banished, with all the common and poor elements of life. No foulness, nor tumult, in those tremulous streets, that filled, or fell, beneath the moon; but rippled music of majestic change, or thrilling silence. No weak walls could rise above them; no low-roofed cottage, nor straw-built shed. Only the strength as of rock, and the finished setting of stones most precious. And around them, far as the eye could reach, still the soft moving of stainless waters, proudly pure; as not the flower, so neither the thorn nor the thistle, could grow in the glancing fields. Ethereal strength of Alps, dreamlike, vanishing in high procession beyond the Torcellan shore; blue islands of Paduan hills, poised in the golden

west. Above, free winds and fiery clouds ranging at their will ;—brightness out of the north, and balm from the south, and the stars of the evening and morning clear in the limitless light of arched heaven and circling sea.

Such was Giorgione's school—such Titian's home.

Near the south-west corner of Covent Garden, a square brick pit or well is formed by a close-set block of houses, to the back windows of which it admits a few rays of light. Access to the bottom of it is obtained out of Maiden Lane, through a low archway and an iron gate ; and if you stand long enough under the archway to accustom your eyes to the darkness you may see on the left hand a narrow door, which formerly gave quiet access to a respectable barber's shop, of which the front window, looking into Maiden Lane, is still extant, filled, in this year (1860), with a row of bottles, connected, in some defunct manner, with a brewer's business. A more fashionable neighbourhood, it is said, eighty years ago than now—never certainly a cheerful one—wherein a boy being born on St. George's day, 1775, began soon after to take interest in the world of Covent Garden, and put to service such spectacles of life as it afforded.

No knights to be seen there, nor, I imagine, many beautiful ladies ; their costume at least disadvantageous, depending much on incumbency of hat and feather, and short waists ; the majesty of men founded similarly on shoe-buckles and wigs ;—impressive enough when Reynolds will do his best for it ; but not suggestive of much ideal delight to a boy.

"*Bello ovile dov' io dormii agnello*<sup>1</sup>": of things beautiful, besides men and women, dusty sunbeams up or down the street on summer mornings ; deep furrowed cabbage-leaves at the greengrocer's ; magnificence of oranges in wheel-barrows round the corner ; and Thames' shore within three minutes' race.

None of these things very glorious ; the best, however, that England, it seems, was then able to provide for a boy of gift : who, such as they are, loves them—never, indeed,

<sup>1</sup> "Fair is the fold where I slept as a lamb."

forgets them. The short waists modify to the last his visions of Greek ideal. His foregrounds had always a succulent cluster or two of greengrocery at the corners. Enchanted oranges gleam in Covent Gardens of the Hesperides; and great ships go to pieces in order to scatter chests of them on the waves. That mist of early sunbeams in the London dawn crosses, many and many a time, the clearness of Italian air; and by 'Thames' shore, with its stranded barges and glidings of red sail, dearer to us than Lucerne lake or Venetian lagoon—by 'Thames' shore we will die.

*Modern Painters*, vol. 5, pt. 9, ch. 9.

## 120. PINE FOREST IN THE JURA

AMONG the hours of his life to which the writer looks back with peculiar gratitude, as having been marked by more than ordinary fulness of joy or clearness of teaching, is one passed, now some years ago, near time of sunset, among the broken masses of pine forest which skirt the course of the Ain, above the village of Champagnole, in the Jura. It is a spot which has all the solemnity, with none of the savageness, of the Alps; where there is a sense of a great power beginning to be manifested in the earth, and of a deep and majestic concord in the rise of the long low lines of piny hills; the first utterance of those mighty mountain symphonies, soon to be more loudly lifted and wildly broken along the battlements of the Alps. But their strength is as yet restrained; and the far-reaching ridges of pastoral mountain succeed each other, like the long and sighing swell which moves over quiet waters from some far-off stormy sea. And there is a deep tenderness pervading that vast monotony. The destructive forces and the stern expression of the central ranges are alike withdrawn. No frost-ploughed, dust-encumbered paths of ancient glacier fret the soft Jura pastures; no splintered heaps of ruin break the fair ranks of her forests; no pale, defiled, or furious rivers rend their rude and

changeeful ways among her rocks. Patiently, eddy by eddy, the clear green streams wind along their well-known beds; and under the dark quietness of the undisturbed pines, there spring up, year by year, such company of joyful flowers as I know not the like of among all the blessings of the earth. It was Spring time, too; and all were coming forth in clusters crowded for very love; there was room enough for all, but they crushed their leaves into all manner of strange shapes only to be nearer each other. There was the wood anemone, star after star, closing every now and then into nebulæ; and there was the oxalis, troop by troop, like virginal processions of the *Mois de Marie*, the dark vertical clefts in the limestone choked up with them as with heavy snow, and touched with ivy on the edges—ivy as light and lovely as the vine; and, ever and anon, a blue gush of violets, and cowslip bells in sunny places; and in the more open ground, the vetch, and comfrey, and mezereon, and the small sapphire buds of the *Polygala Alpina*, and the wild strawberry, just a blossom or two, all showered amidst the golden softness of deep, warm, amber-coloured moss. I came out presently on the edge of the ravine: the solemn murmur of its waters rose suddenly from beneath, mixed with the singing of the thrushes among the pine boughs; and, on the opposite side of the valley, walled all along as it was by grey cliffs of limestone, there was a hawk sailing slowly off their brow, touching them nearly with his wings, and with the shadows of the pines flickering upon his plumage from above; but with a fall of a hundred fathoms under his breast, and the curling pools of the green river gliding and glittering dizzily beneath him, their foam globes moving with him as he flew. It would be difficult to conceive a scene less dependent upon any other interest than that of its own secluded and serious beauty; but the writer well remembers the sudden blankness and chill which were cast upon it when he endeavoured, in order more strictly to arrive at the sources of its impressiveness, to imagine it, for a moment, a scene in some aboriginal forest of the New Continent. The flowers in an instant lost their light, the

river its music ; the hills became oppressively desolate : a heaviness in the boughs of the darkened forest showed how much of their former power had been dependent upon a life which was not theirs, how much of the glory of the imperishable, or continually renewed, creation is reflected from things more precious in their memories than it, in its renewing. Those ever springing flowers and ever flowing streams had been dyed by the deep colours of human endurance, valour, and virtue ; and the crests of the sable hills that rose against the evening sky received a deeper worship, because their far shadows fell eastward over the iron wall of Joux, and the four-square keep of Granson.

*Seven Lamps of Architecture*, ch. 6.

## 121. THE KINGDOM OF GOD

"THY kingdom come," we are bid to ask then ! But how shall it come ? With power and great glory, it is written ; and yet not with observation, it is also written. Strange kingdom ! Yet its strangeness is renewed to us with every dawn.

When the time comes for us to wake out of the world's sleep, why should it be otherwise than out of the dreams of the night ? Singing of birds, first, broken and low, as, not to dying eyes, but eyes that wake to life, " the casement slowly grows a glimmering square " ; and then the gray, and then the rose of dawn ; and last the light, whose going forth is to the ends of heaven.

This kingdom it is not in our power to bring ; but it is to receive. Nay, it is come already, in part ; but not received, because men love chaos best ; and the Night, with her daughters. That is still the only question for us, as in the old Elias days, " If ye will receive it." With pains it may be shut out still from many a dark place of cruelty ; by sloth it may be still unseen for many a glorious hour. But the pain of shutting it out must grow greater and greater :—

harder, every day, that struggle of man with man in the abyss, and shorter wages for the fiend's work. But it is still at our choice; the simoom-dragon may still be served if we will, in the fiery desert, or else God walking in the garden, at cool of day. Coolness now, not of Hesperus over Atlas, stooped endurer of toil; but of Heosphorus over Sion, the joy of the earth. The choice is no vague nor doubtful one. High on the desert mountain, full descried, sits throned the tempter, with his old promise—the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them. He still calls you to your labour, as Christ to your rest;—labour and sorrow, base desire, and cruel hope. So far as you desire to possess, rather than to give; so far as you look for power to command, instead of to bless; so far as your own prosperity seems to you to issue out of contest or rivalry, of any kind, with other men, or other nations; so long as the hope before you is for supremacy instead of love; and your desire is to be greatest, instead of least;—first, instead of last;—so long you are serving the Lord of all that is last, and least;—the last enemy that shall be destroyed—Death; and you shall have death's crown, with the worm coiled in it; and death's wages, with the worm feeding on them; kindred of the earth shall you yourself become; saying to the grave, "Thou art my father"; and to the worm, "Thou art my mother, and my sister."

I leave you to judge, and to choose, between this labour, and the bequeathed peace; these wages, and the gift of the Morning Star; this obedience, and the doing of the will which shall enable you to claim another kindred than of the earth, and to hear another voice than that of the grave, saying, "My brother, and sister, and mother."

*Modern Painters*, vol. 5 (conclusion).

## MATTHEW ARNOLD

### 122. OXFORD

No, we are all seekers still ! seekers often make mistakes, and I wish mine to redound to my own discredit only, and not to touch Oxford. Beautiful city ! so venerable, so lovely, so unravaged by the fierce intellectual life of our century, so serene !

There are our young barbarians, all at play ! And yet, steeped in sentiment as she lies, spreading her gardens to the moonlight, and whispering from her towers the last enchantments of the Middle Age, who will deny that Oxford, by her ineffable charm, keeps ever calling us nearer to the true goal of all of us, to the ideal, to perfection,—to beauty, in a word, which is only truth seen from another side ?—nearer, perhaps, than all the science of Tübingen. Adorable dreamer, whose heart has been so romantic ! who hast given thyself so prodigally, given thyself to sides and to heroes not mine, only never to the Philistines ! home of lost causes, and forsaken beliefs, and unpopular names, and impossible loyalties ! what example could ever so inspire us to keep down the Philistine in ourselves, what teacher could ever so save us from that bondage to which we are all prone, that bondage which Goethe, in those incomparable lines on the death of Schiller, makes it his friend's highest praise (and nobly did Schiller deserve the praise) to have left miles out of sight behind him ;—the bondage of "*was uns alle bandigt, DAS GEMEINE !*"<sup>1</sup> She will forgive me, even if I have unwittingly drawn upon her a shot or two aimed at her unworthy

<sup>1</sup> " That which fetters us all—the commonplace."

son ; for she is generous, and the cause in which I fight is, after all, hers. Apparitions of a day, what is our puny warfare against the Philistines, compared with the warfare which this queen of romance has been waging against them for centuries, and will wage after we are gone ?

*Essays in Criticism* (Preface).

### 123. MARCUS AURELIUS

IN general, however, the action Marcus Aurelius prescribes is action which every sound nature must recognise as right, and the motives he assigns are motives which every clear reason must recognise as valid. And so he remains the especial friend and comforter of all clear-headed and scrupulous, yet pure-hearted and upward-striving men, in those ages most especially that walk by sight, not by faith, and yet have no open vision : he cannot give such souls, perhaps, all they yearn for, but he gives them much ; and what he gives them, they can receive.

Yet no, it is not for what he thus gives them that such souls love him most ! it is rather because of the emotion which lends to his voice so touching an accent, it is because he too yearns as they do for something unattained by him. What an affinity for Christianity had this persecutor of the Christians ! the effusion of Christianity, its relieving tears, its happy self-sacrifice, were the very element, one feels, for which his soul longed : they were near him, they brushed him, he touched them, he passed them by. One feels, too, that the Marcus Aurelius one reads must still have remained, even had Christianity been fully known to him, in a great measure himself : he would have been no Justin : but how would Christianity have affected him ? in what measure would it have changed him ? Granted that he might have found, like the *Alogi* in ancient and modern times, in the most beautiful of the Gospels, the Gospel which has leavened Christendom most powerfully, the Gospel of St. John, too

much Greek metaphysics, too much *gnosis*; granted that this Gospel might have looked too like what he knew already to be a total surprise to him: what, then, would he have said to the Sermon on the Mount, to the twenty-sixth chapter of St. Matthew? what would have become of his notions of the *exitiabilis superstitio*, of the "obstinacy of the Christians?" Vain question! yet the greatest charm of Marcus Aurelius is that he makes us ask it. We see him wise, just, self-governed, tender, thankful, blameless; yet, with all this, agitated, stretching out his arms for something beyond,—*tendentemque manus ripae ulterioris amore*.<sup>1</sup>

*Essays in Criticism.*

#### 124. WORDSWORTH'S STYLE

EVERY one who has any sense for these things feels the subtle turn, the heightening, which is given to a poet's verse by his genius for style. We can feel it in the

"After life's fitful fever he sleeps well"—

of Shakespeare; in the

... "though fall'n on evil days,  
On evil days though fall'n, and evil tongues"—

of Milton. It is the incomparable charm of Milton's power of poetic style which gives such worth to *Paradise Regained*, and makes a great poem of a work in which Milton's imagination does not soar high. Wordsworth has in constant possession, and at command, no style of this kind; but he had too poetic a nature, and had read the great poets too well, not to catch, as I have already remarked, something of it occasionally. We find it not only in his Miltonic lines; we find it in such a phrase as this, where the manner is his own, not Milton's—

<sup>1</sup> "Stretching out his arms in yearning for the further shore." Virgil, *Aeneid* vi. 314.

... "the fierce confederate storm  
Of sorrow barricadoed evermore  
Within the walls of cities";

although even here, perhaps, the power of style, which is undeniable, is more properly that of eloquent prose than the subtle heightening and change wrought by genuine poetic style. It is style, again, and the elevation given by style, which chiefly makes the effectiveness of *Laodameia*. Still the right sort of verse to choose from Wordsworth, if we are to seize his true and most characteristic form of expression, is a line like this from *Michael*—

"And never lifted up a single stone."

There is nothing subtle in it, no heightening, no study of poetic style, strictly so called, at all; yet it is expression of the highest and most truly expressive kind.

Wordsworth owed much to Burns, and a style of perfect plainness, relying for effect solely on the weight and force of that which with entire fidelity it utters, Burns could show him... Still Wordsworth's use of it has something unique and unmatchable. Nature herself seems, I say, to take the pen out of his hand, and to write for him with her own bare, sheer, penetrating power. This arises from two causes: from the profound sincerity with which Wordsworth feels his subject, and also from the profoundly sincere and natural character of his subject itself. He can and will treat such a subject with nothing but the most plain first-hand, almost austere naturalness. His expression may often be called bald, as, for instance, in the poem of *Resolution and Independence*; but it is bald as the bare mountain tops are bald, with a baldness which is full of grandeur.

*Essays in Criticism (Second Series).*

## THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY

### 125. EDUCATION AND LIFE

SUPPOSE it were perfectly certain that the life and fortune of every one of us would, one day or other, depend upon his winning or losing a game at chess. Don't you think that we should all consider it to be a primary duty to learn at least the names and moves of the pieces; to have a notion of a gambit, and a keen eye for all the means of giving and getting out of check? Do you not think that we should look with a disapprobation amounting to scorn, upon the father who allowed his son, or the state which allowed its members, to grow up without knowing a pawn from a knight?

Yet it is a very plain and elementary truth that the life, the fortune and the happiness of every one of us, and, more or less, of those who are connected with us, do depend upon our knowing something of the rules of a game infinitely more difficult and complicated than chess. It is a game which has been played for untold ages, every man and woman of us being one of the two players in a game of his or her own. The chess-board is the world, the pieces are the phenomena of the Universe, the rules of the game are what we call the laws of Nature. The player on the other side is hidden from us. We know that his play is always fair, just and patient. But also we know, to our cost, that he never overlooks a mistake, or makes the smallest allowance for ignorance. To the man who plays well, the highest stakes are paid, with that sort of overflowing generosity with which the strong shows delight in strength. And one

who plays ill is checkmated—without haste, but without remorse.

My metaphor will remind some of you of the famous picture in which Retzsch has depicted Satan playing at chess with man for his soul. Substitute for the mocking fiend in that picture a calm, strong angel who is playing for love, as we say, and would rather lose than win—and I should accept it as an image of human life.

Well, what I mean by Education is learning the rules of this mighty game. In other words, education is the instruction of the intellect in the laws of Nature, under which name I include not merely things and their forces, but men and their ways; and the fashioning of the affections and of the will into an earnest and loving desire to move in harmony with those laws. For me, education means neither more nor less than this. Anything which professes to call itself education must be tried by this standard, and if it fails to stand the test, I will not call it education, whatever be the force of authority, or of numbers, upon the other side.

*Essays.*

## JOHN RICHARD GREEN

### 126. THE LAST DAYS OF QUEEN ELIZABETH

THE triumph of Mountjoy flung its lustre over the last days of Elizabeth, but no outer triumph could break the gloom which gathered round the dying Queen. Lonely as she had always been, her loneliness deepened as she drew towards the grave. The statesmen and warriors of her earlier days had dropped one by one from her Council board ; and their successors were watching her last moments, and intriguing for favour in the coming reign. The old splendour of her Court waned and disappeared. Only officials remained about her, "the other of the Council and nobility estrange themselves by all occasions." As she passed along in her progresses, the people whose applause she courted remained cold and silent. The temper of the age, in fact, was changing, and isolating her as it changed. Her own England, the England which had grown up around her, serious, moral, prosaic, shrank coldly from this child of earth and the Renaissance, brilliant, fanciful, unscrupulous, irreligious. She had enjoyed life as the men of her day enjoyed it, and now that they were gone she clung to it with a fierce tenacity. She hunted, she danced, she jested with her young favourites, she coquetted and scolded and frolicked at sixty-seven as she had done at thirty. "The Queen," wrote a courtier a few months before her death, "was never so gallant these many years, nor so set upon jollity." She persisted, in spite of opposition, in her gorgeous progresses from country-house to country-house. She clung to business

as of old, and rated in her usual fashion "one who minded not to giving up some matter of account." But death crept on. Her face became haggard, and her frame shrank almost to a skeleton. At last her taste for finery disappeared, and she refused to change her dresses for a week together. A strange melancholy settled down on her: "She held in her hand," says one who saw her in her last days, "a golden cup, which she often put to her lips; but, in truth, her heart seemed too full to need more filling." Gradually her mind gave way. She lost her memory, the violence of her temper became unbearable, her very courage seemed to forsake her. She called for a sword to lie constantly beside her, and thrust it from time to time through the arras, as if she heard murderers stirring there. Food and rest became alike distasteful. She sate day and night propped up with pillows on a stool, her finger on her lip, her eyes fixed on the floor, without a word. If she once broke the silence, it was with a flash of her old queenliness. Cecil asserted that she "must" go to bed, and the word roused her like a trumpet. "Must," she exclaimed, "is *must* a word to be addressed to princes? Little man, little man! thy father, if he had been alive, durst not have used that word." Then, as her anger spent itself, she sank into her old dejection. "Thou art so presumptuous," she said, "because thou knowest I shall die." She rallied once more when the ministers beside her bed named Lord Beauchamp, the heir to the Suffolk claim, as a possible successor. "I will have no rogue's son," she cried hoarsely, "in my seat." But she gave no sign, save a motion of the head, at the mention of the King of Scots. She was in fact fast becoming insensible; and early the next morning the life of Elizabeth, a life so great, so strange and lonely in its greatness, passed quietly away.

*A Short History of the English People.*

## JAMES BRYCE

### 127. CORONATION OF CHARLES THE GREAT A.D. 800

At length the Frankish host entered Rome. The Pope's cause was heard ; his innocence, already vindicated by a miracle, was pronounced by the Patrician in full Synod ; his accusers condemned in his stead. Charles remained in the city for some weeks ; and on Christmas Day, A.D. 800, he heard mass in the basilica of St. Peter. On the spot where now the gigantic dome of Bramante and Michael Angelo towers over the buildings of the modern city, the spot which tradition had hallowed as that of the Apostle's martyrdom, Constantine the Great had erected the oldest and stateliest temple of Christian Rome. Nothing could be less like than was this basilica to those northern cathedrals, shadowy, fantastic, irregular, crowded with pillars, fringed all round by clustering shrines and chapels, which are to most of us the types of mediæval architecture. In its plan and decorations, in the spacious sunny hall, the roof plain as that of a Greek temple, the long rows of Corinthian columns, the vivid mosaics on its walls, in its brightness, its sternness, its simplicity, it had preserved every feature of Roman art, and had remained a perfect expression of the Roman character. Out of the transept a flight of steps led up to the high altar underneath and just beyond the great arch, the arch of triumph as it was called : behind in the semi-circular apse sat the clergy, rising tier above tier around its walls ; in the midst, high above the rest, and looking down

past the altar over the multitude, was placed the bishop's throne, itself the curule chair of some forgotten magistrate. From that chair the Pope now rose, as the reading of the Gospel ended, advanced to where Charles—who had exchanged his simple Frankish dress for the sandals and the chlamys of a Roman patrician—knelt in prayer by the high altar, and as in the sight of all he placed upon the brow of the barbarian chieftain the diadem of the Caesars, then bent in obeisance before him, the church rang to the shout of the multitude, again free, again the lords and centre of the world, “Karolo Augusto a Deo coronato magno et pacifico imperatori vita et victoria.” In that shout, echoed by the Franks without, was pronounced the union, so long in preparation, so mighty in its consequences, of the Roman and the Teuton, of the memories and the civilisation of the South with the fresh energy of the North, and from that moment modern history begins.

*The Holy Roman Empire*, ch. 4.

## 128. CHARACTER OF CHARLES THE GREAT

LIKE all the foremost men of our race, Charles was all great things in one, and was so great just because the workings of his genius were so harmonious. He was not a mere barbarian warrior any more than he was an astute diplomatist; there is none of all his qualities which would not be forced out of its place were we to characterize him chiefly by it. Comparisons between famous men of different ages are generally as worthless as they are easy: the circumstances among which Charles lived do not permit us to institute a minute parallel between his greatness and that of those two to whom it is the modern fashion to compare him, nor to say whether he was or could have become as profound a politician as Caesar, as skilful a commander as Napoleon. But neither to the Roman nor to the Corsican was he inferior in that one quality by which he and they chiefly

impress our imaginations—that intense, vivid, unresting energy which swept him over Europe in campaign after campaign, which sought a field for its workings in theology, science, literature, no less than in politics and war. As it was this wondrous activity that made him the conqueror of Europe, so it was by the variety of his culture that he became her civilizer. From him, in whose wide deep mind the whole mediaeval theory of the world and human life mirrored itself, did mediaeval society take the form and impress which it retained for centuries, and the traces whereof are among us and upon us to this day.

The great Emperor was buried at Aachen, in that basilica which it had been the delight of his later years to erect and adorn with the treasures of ancient art. His tomb under the dome—where now we see an enormous slab, with the words “Carolo Magno”—was inscribed, “*Magnus atque Orthodoxus Imperator.*” Poets, fostered by his own zeal, sang of him who had given to Franks the sway of Romulus. The gorgeous drapery of romance gradually wreathed itself round his name, till by canonization as a saint he received the highest glory the world or the church could confer. For the Roman Church claimed then, as she claims still, the privilege which humanity in one form or another seems scarce able to deny itself, of raising to honours almost divine its great departed ; and as in Pagan times temples had risen to a deified Emperor, so churches were dedicated to St. Charlemagne. Between Sanctus Carolus and Divus Julius how strange an analogy and how strange a contrast !

*Ibid.*, ch. 5.

## WALTER HORATIO PATER

### 129. SYMBOLISM

THE personification of abstract ideas by modern painters or sculptors, of wealth, of commerce, of health, for instance, shocks, in most cases, the aesthetic sense, as something conventional or rhetorical, as a mere transparent allegory, or figure of speech, which could please almost no one. On the other hand, such symbolical representations, under the form of human persons, as Giotto's *Virtues* and *Vices* at Padua, or his *Saint Poverty* at Assisi, or the series of the planets in certain early Italian engravings, are profoundly poetical and impressive. They seem to be something more than mere symbolism, and to be connected with some peculiarly sympathetic penetration, on the part of the artist, into the subjects he intended to depict. Symbolism as intense as this, is the creation of a special temper, in which a certain simplicity, taking all things literally, *au pied de la lettre*, is united to a vivid pre-occupation with the aesthetic beauty of the image itself, the *figured* side of figurative expression, the *form* of the metaphor.

When it is said, "Out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword," that temper is ready to deal directly and boldly with that difficult image, like that old designer of the fourteenth century, who has depicted this, and other images of the Apocalypse, in a coloured window at Bourges. Such symbolism cares a great deal for the hair of *Temperance*, discreetly bound, for some subtler likeness to the colour of

the sky in the girdle of *Hope*, for the inwoven flames in the red garment of *Charity*.

And what was specially peculiar to the temper of the old Florentine painter, Giotto, to the temper of his age in general, doubtless, more than to that of ours, was the persistent and universal mood of the age in which the story of Demeter and Persephone was first created. If some painter of our own time has conceived the image of *The Day* so intensely, that we hardly think of distinguishing between the image, with its girdle of dissolving morning mist, and the meaning of the image; if William Blake, to our so great delight, makes the morning stars literally "sing together"—these fruits of individual genius are in part also a "survival" from a different age, with the whole mood of which this mode of expression was more congruous than it is with ours. But there are traces of the old temper in the man of to-day also; and through these we can understand that earlier time—a very poetical time, with the more highly gifted peoples—in which every impression men received of the action of powers without or within them suggested to them the presence of a soul or will, like their own—a person, with a living spirit, and senses, and hands, and feet; which, when it talked of the return of Kore to Demeter, or the marriage of Zeus and Here, was not using rhetorical language, but yielding to a real illusion; to which the voice of man "was really a stream, beauty an effluence, death a mist."

*Greek Studies (Demeter).*

## FREDERIC WILLIAM HENRY MYERS

### 130. THE MAGIC OF POETRY

AND, indeed, in poetry of the first order, almost every word (to use a mathematical metaphor) is raised to a higher power. It continues to be an articulate sound and a logical step in the argument ; but it becomes also a musical sound and a centre of emotional force. It becomes a musical sound ;—that is to say, its consonants and vowels are arranged to bear a relation to the consonants and vowels near it,—a relation of which accent, quantity, rhyme, assonance, and alliteration are specialised forms, but which may be of a character more subtle than any of these. And it becomes a centre of emotional force ; that is to say, the complex associations which it evokes modify the associations evoked by other words in the same passage in a way quite distinct from grammatical or logical connection. The poet, therefore, must avoid two opposite dangers. If he thinks too exclusively of the music and the colouring of his verse—of the imaginative means of suggesting thought and feeling—what he writes will lack reality and sense. But if he cares only to communicate definite thought and feeling according to the ordinary laws of eloquent speech, his verse is likely to be deficient in magical and suggestive power. And what is meant by the vague praise so often bestowed on Virgil's unequalled style is practically this, that he has been, perhaps, more successful than any other poet in fusing together the expressed and the suggested emotion ; that he has discovered the hidden music which can give to every shade of feeling

its distinction, its permanence and its charm; that his thoughts seem to come to us on the wings of melodies prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

*Classical Essays (Virgil).*

### 131. THE STORY OF DIDO

YET Virgil's familiarity with the statelier life of Rome was not unfruitful. It has given to him in his *Aeneid* an added touch of dignity, as of one who has seen face to face such greatness as earth can offer, and paints without misgiving the commerce of potentates and kings. And thus it is that he has filled every scene of Dido's story with a sense of royal scope and unchartered power; as of an existence where all honours are secure already, and all that is wished for won, only the heart demands an inner sanctuary, and life's magnificence still lacks its crowning joy. First we have the banquet, when love is as yet unacknowledged and unknown, but the "signs of his coming and the sounds of his feet" have begun to raise all things to an intenser glow; when the singer's song rises more glorious, and all voices ring more full and free, and ancestral ceremonies are kindled into life by the ungovernable gladness of the soul. Then comes the secluded colloquy between queen and princess, as they discuss the guest who made the night so strange and new; and then the rush of Dido's gathering passion among the majestic symbols of her sway:

With him the queen the long ways wanders down,  
And shows him Sidon's wealth and Carthage town,  
And oft would speak, but as the words begin  
Fails her breath caught by mastering Love within;—  
Once more in feast must she the night employ,  
Must hear once more her Trojan tell of Troy,  
Hang on his kingly voice, and shuddering see  
The imagined scenes where every scene is he.  
Then guests are gone, and night and morn are met,  
Far off in heaven the solemn stars have set,—

Thro' the empty halls alone she mourns again,  
Lies on the couch where hath her hero lain,  
Sees in the dark his kingly face, and hears  
His voice imagined in her amorous ears.

And through all the scenes that follow the same royal accent runs, till the last words that lift our imagination from the tumultuous grief around the dying Dido to the scarce more terrible tragedy of a great nation's fall :

Not else than thus, when foes have forced a way,  
On Tyre or Carthage falls the fatal day ;—  
'Mid such wild woe crash down in roaring fire  
Temples and towers of Carthage or of Tyre.

And assuredly the "Deeds of the Roman People," the title which many men gave to the *Aeneid* when it first appeared, would not have been complete without some such chapter as this. The prophecy of Anchises, the shield of Vulcan, record for us the imperial city's early virtue, her world-wide sway ; but it is in this tale of Carthage that the poet has written in a burning parable the passion and the pomp of Rome.

*Classical Essays (Virgil).*

## ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

### 132. NIGHT IN THE OPEN WORLD

NIGHT is a dead monotonous period under a roof ; but in the open world it passes lightly, with its stars and dews and perfumes, and the hours are marked by changes in the face of Nature. What seems a kind of temporal death to people choked between walls and curtains, is only a light and living slumber to the man who sleeps a-field. All night long he can hear Nature breathing deeply and freely ; even as she takes rest, she turns and smiles ; and there is one stirring hour unknown to those who dwell in houses, when a wakeful influence goes abroad over the sleeping hemisphere, and all the out-door world are on their feet. It is then that the cock first crows, not this time to announce the dawn, but like a cheerful watchman speeding the course of night. Cattle awake on the meadows ; sheep break their fast on dewy hillsides, and change to a new lair among the ferns ; and houseless men, who have lain down with the fowls, open their dim eyes and behold the beauty of the night.

*Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes.*

### 133. TALK

A GOOD talk is not to be had for the asking. Humours must first be accorded in a kind of overture or prologue ; hour, company and circumstance be suited ; and then, at a

fit juncture, the subject, the quarry of two heated minds, spring up like a deer out of the wood. Not that the talker has any of the hunter's pride, though he has all and more than all his ardour. The genuine artist follows the stream of conversation as an angler follows the windings of a brook, not dallying where he fails to "kill." He trusts implicitly to hazard; and he is rewarded by continual variety, continual pleasure, and those changing prospects of the truth that are the best of education. There is nothing in a subject, so called, that we should regard it as an idol, or follow it beyond the promptings of desire. Indeed, there are few subjects; and so far as they are truly talkable, more than half of them may be reduced to three: that I am I, that you are you, and that there are other people dimly understood to be not quite the same as either. Wherever talk may range, it still runs half the time on these eternal lines. The theme being set, each plays on himself as on an instrument; asserts and justifies himself; ransacks his brain for instances and opinions, and brings them forth new-minted, to his own surprise and the admiration of his adversary. All natural talk is a festival of ostentation, and by the laws of the game each accepts and fans the vanity of the other. It is from that reason that we venture to lay ourselves so open, that we dare to be so warmly eloquent, and that we swell in each other's eyes to such a vast proportion. For talkers, once launched, begin to overflow the limits of their ordinary selves, tower up to the height of their secret pretensions, and give themselves out for the heroes, brave, pious, musical and wise, that in their most shining moments they aspire to be. So they weave for themselves with words and for a while inhabit a palace of delights, temple at once and theatre, where they fill the round of the world's dignities, and feast with the gods, exulting in Kudos. And when the talk is over, each goes his way, still flushed with vanity and admiration, still trailing clouds of glory, each declines from the height of his ideal orgie, not in a moment, but by slow declension. I remember, in the *entr'acte* of an afternoon performance, coming forth into the sunshine, in a beautiful

green, gardened corner of a romantic city ; and as I sat and smoked, the music moving in my blood, I seemed to sit there and evaporate *The Flying Dutchman* (for it was that I had been hearing) with a wonderful sense of life, warmth, well-being and pride ; and the noises of the city, voices, bells and marching feet, fell together in my ears like a symphonious orchestra. In the same way, the excitement of a good talk lives for a long while after in the blood, the heart still hot within you, the brain still simmering, and the physical earth swimming around you with the colours of the sunset.

*Memories and Portraits.*

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